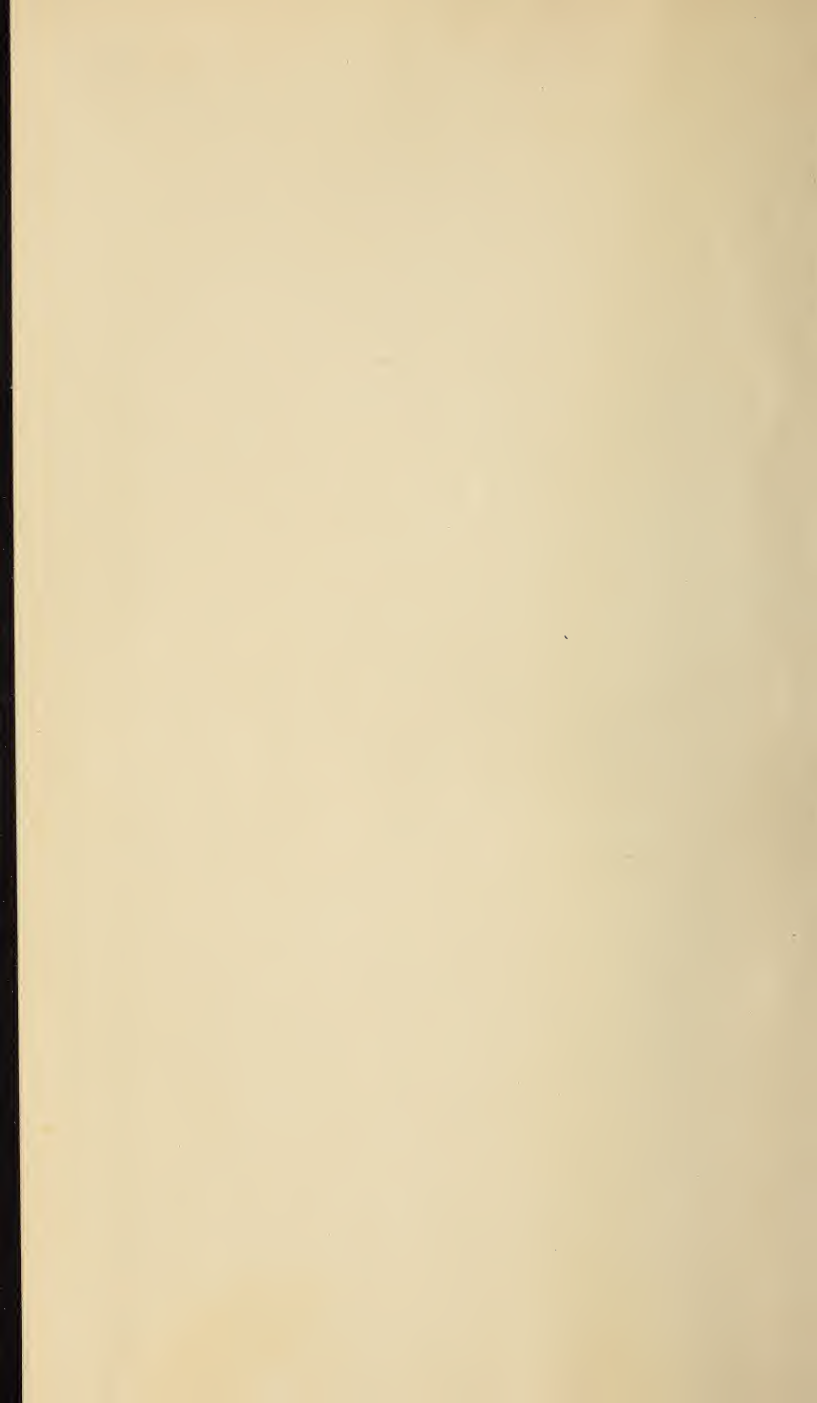




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CORREGGIO:

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Adam Gottlob

A TRAGEDY, BY OEHLenschLAGER. ^

SAPPHO:

A TRAGEDY, BY GRILLPARZER.

WITH A SKETCH

OF THE

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF OEHLenschLAGER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

BOSTON:

PHILLIPS AND SAMPSON.

1846.

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NOTICE.

IT was my intention to translate the whole of the very pleasing autobiography of Œhlenschlager, but circumstances have prevented me from executing more than this small sketch. The original is marked by an extreme simplicity, which is also a characteristic of all Œhlenschlager's writings.

Several scenes from "Correggio" have already been published in Blackwood's Magazine, and transferred from thence into Professor Longfellow's "Poets and Poetry of Europe." The translation of these scenes is distinguished by elegance of elaborate versification; but if the German reader will compare both translations with the original, although he will perceive many defects in the following pages, he will find them true to the simple expression of the poetry of Œhlenschlager.

Grillparzer's "Sappho" is also distinguished by a simple and natural expression of feeling, and a conciseness of diction that in the translation becomes almost prosaic. I will only add, in order to give it a home in the heart as well as in the language, that it was a favorite of Mrs. Hemans.

E. L.

JULY, 1846.



SKETCH
OF THE
LIFE OF ÆHLENSCHLAGER.

FROM HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

THE tragedy of Correggio is the most celebrated of the works of Æhlenschlager, the first among Danish poets, although written and published in the German tongue ; thereby claiming and obtaining a more extensive public. There is something in the character of Æhlenschlager and of his writings so simply and purely healthful, in a temperament so alive to the poetry of life ; an organization so serene and happy, and a result so equable and uniform, that we are curious to know under what circumstances the true and honest nature of the poet was preserved through a long life, free from all bitter and unhealthful mixtures. He seems to unite with the warmth, the sunny light, the spontaneous vivacity of the

south, the steady sustained calmness and reserved ideality of the north. Like his own Antonio,

"Nature in him is kind ;
The kindling fire not merely warms, but burns ;
Yet passion never with the vulture's claw
Seizes upon him."

Though born in poverty, the circumstances of his life were, for such a nature, most happy. His father, organist and steward of the royal castle of Fredericsburg, in a suburb of Copenhagen, seems to have possessed the same easy and serene disposition as his son ; and to have been a most kind and indulgent parent, leaving the gentle boy to unfold his character without severe control, or a too childish indulgence. But it was from his mother, as he tells us, that his genius was inherited. She was a German, of refined nature, and delicately nurtured. He says, "I resembled her in character, and in person also. For the earnestness and melancholy in my character I have to thank her, and my father for my healthy organization and cheerful disposition. My mother possessed both sensibility and imagination ; the tragical that I have been able to embody I derived from her ; but, alas, I brought no laurel wreath to divide with her ; those I gathered were laid upon her grave.

"In my second year, I was sleeping, one night, by my father's side, when I was awakened by a great tumult in the house. My father opened the window, and I saw the old familiar stork soaring away over the trees. In the morning, I went into my mother's chamber, and found the little puppet, the stork had left in the night, lying in the bed by my mother's side." This was his only sister, Sophia Wilhel-

mina Bertha, according to the tradition of Danish children, brought as a choice blessing by that sacred domestic guardian, the stork.

The circumstances of Æhlenschlager's childhood were favorable to his poetical development. He was born in a small house, just at the entrance of the splendid avenue of beech trees leading to the royal castle, of which his father was the steward. This royal residence was filled with pictures, statues, and the choicest works of art. Opposite was Suderfeld, which had been converted into a beautiful English park. "Our mode of life," he says, "differed in summer and in winter, as much as the seasons. In summer, the apartments were crowded with celebrated men and beautiful well-dressed women: the whole court was there. We children could look through the door and see the whole royal family sitting at the table, while the loveliest music was playing within. Every Sunday evening there was Turkish music in the gardens, and the people could walk therein. The English park, on the contrary, was sacred to the royal guests, and was always still, retired, and solitary. My father kept the key, and my sister and myself were allowed to wander within the shadow of its noble trees." Late in the autumn, the whole royal family removed to the city. There was no longer music and feasting, but carpenters, painters and decorators, from whom the future poet and artist learnt more, perhaps, than from the high-born and well-dressed guests. The actual northern winter came, and the castle was to the steward's family a complete hermitage, with two dogs and two sentinels, sheltered like them, within its heavy walls. In storms, in rain and snow, the father sat in his blouse, with the smallest dog at his side, and read aloud to his family. They

followed Albert Julius and Robinson Crusoe to their islands ; roved in fairy-land with Aladdin and his lamp, or laughed at Don Quixote and Holberg's comedies.

In this desultory, independent manner of life, Oehlenschläger reached his twelfth year, having, as he says, learnt nothing ; but the reader feels that these years, passed in the midst of an extensive park, surrounded by works of art, accompanied by inspiring music, could never have been lost upon a poetical organization like his.

Oehlenschläger's passion for the stage began to display itself in his twelfth year. He began to write comedies, and with the aid of his sister and a young friend of his own age, performed them to their own and the satisfaction of their older friends. His father intended to educate him for a merchant, but the gentleman in whose counting-house he was to have been placed, not being able just then to receive him, the plan was abandoned, and his father, with his usual good nature, consented that he should try his fortune upon the stage. After a sufficient time spent with the dancing, the fencing and the posture-master, (his mental preparation had been going on almost from his birth, for almost his whole study had been the drama,) and he had submitted to the discipline of the barber, also to that of the delicate shoe and glove maker, he made his first appearance upon a public stage. His father went secretly into the theatre, but his mother and sister remained at home as long as the tender mother's anxiety would permit ; but although the winter evening was cold and dark, she could not preserve her self-possession, and remain coldly absent. At the moment the piece was to begin, she went to the lobby of the theatre, and wept and prayed for her son. The sentinel's wife, who mis-

understood her emotion, said, "Ah! madam, do not weep; perhaps he may yet be converted." His mother lived to witness his conversion from that devotion to the life of an actor, which, no doubt, secretly made one of the petitions of that mother's heart, on this evening of her prayer.

His success as an actor was only moderate; he soon found out, also, that, to see the rainbow and the beautiful halo of the planets, one must not be in the mist or rain-drops, of which they are formed, but observe them from a far different point of view.

In the two years that Œhlenschlager spent on the boards he gained much knowledge of life, and acquired many valuable acquaintances among amateurs and artists. He formed at this time a friendship with Rahbek, the Danish poet, whose wife was both *spirituelle* and accomplished; also a close intimacy with two brothers by the name of Œrsted; students, the one of law, the other of medicine, both lovers of poetry. These brothers were, like twins, always together. They were peculiar also, and remind one, in some degree, of the brothers Cheeryble. They lived for each other's friendship; went about in winter in great overcoats, that also served for dressing-gowns, and leaned, like the Siamese twins, on each other. But these Dioscuri shone in genius like stars, and what was beneath their heavy over-coats could not long remain concealed. In their classes in the college, they took both honors and prizes. Under the auspices of these brothers, Œhlenschlager was admitted to hear the lectures, then highly valuable, in the college of Copenhagen. He says, "When I entered the halls it seemed as though the old books in parchment, and the new in modern bindings, looked reproachfully at me, and asked, 'Wherefore have you left us?'"

I thought to myself, what can this mean?" He was already tired of the drudgery of the stage, although his passion for the drama was not abated, and therefore he understood the silent reproach of the books. He felt, also, that there was danger of his falling into the dissipated levity of the life of an actor; at least, of those whose whole time is not absorbed by taking the first rank as histrionic artists.

Influenced by the advice of the Cærsteds, Cæhlenschlager left the stage, and entered upon a course of study to prepare himself for an examination, in order to enter the law classes of the university. He spake with his father, who, as usual, left him to follow his inclination. "I was now again," he says, "in heaven." In the intervals of study he could plan his tragedies, and write them out upon the days when there was no lecture. In the hours of study, also, the dry folios of the law were often neglected for the charms of Horace and Virgil.

His life had now become more earnest; he had a goal before him, that of becoming a lawyer, and of taking his place among his fellow-men as an advocate. By joining the law-school he was introduced to the literary clubs of young students, that seem, in Copenhagen, to be societies that really love letters and each other. The kindest and most honorable and elevated tone of feeling prevails. The young men call each other *thou*, and with a spirit of freedom and equality swear to each other *brotherhood* while belonging to the same club, although in the world they are separated by a wide difference in rank and in worldly circumstances.

These literary brotherhoods of young students admit them to a species of happiness which belongs to the male sex, and to the elect only among them, and in the period of youthful

enthusiasm. Women have not yet formed such pure and devout attachment to literature and the arts, as to form societies among themselves for their own culture and for devotion to the arts. Many reasons might be given for and some against such combinations, but this is not the place to discuss them.

Here Œhlenschläger became acquainted (in their own language) with the works of those shining stars in the literature of Germany, Herder, Goethe and Schiller, and corrected the false taste which had led him to prefer Kotzebue's tragedies, Schiller's Robbers, and Goethe's first works, to the more manly literature of their later writings. The Sorrows of Werter, he says, retained always the power over him that it first exerted upon his imagination. The preferences and tastes ripened by years must have slumbered in the bud of childhood; but many of the illusions and superstitions of youth remain, even after years have unfolded the power of art, and knowledge has chased away the shadows of ignorance. "Happy are those," he says, "who can eat of the tree of knowledge, without being hunted from the paradise of innocence and nature."

Before Œhlenschläger had finished his law studies, he had the grief to lose his mother; that fond mother that he so much resembled in mind and person; the only friend to whom he had imparted his early efforts at poetry and literary composition, over which she rejoiced with the proud tenderness of a mother, but anticipated not his future success. He says, "I saw those eyes, so like my own, become dim with the approach of death; I felt those hands, that had ever been busied in the service of others, become cold and lifeless. Thus she slept. My father closed her eyes, and we followed to place the loved form in the *Gods-field*, where I also wish,

hereafter, to rest." Sorrow could not remain long an inmate of a heart so light ; it could not long intrude upon his buoyant spirits ; he says his happy temperament soon drew him from the shadow to the sunshine of life.

After the death of this tender mother the fireside of his home was less attractive, but the loss was soon alleviated through the influence of her who was to be his future wife, Christiana, the daughter of Counsellor Heger. The poet Rahbek had married a sister, and thus introduced him to the family. Although there is a very inconvenient absence of dates in this autobiography of the poet, he was at this time apparently about twenty years old. He had, as yet, published nothing ; his prospects could not have been very flattering. His studies were not yet finished, and only in his profession of the law could he hope for success sufficient to allow him to marry. He thus describes the lady to whom he ventured to offer all he possessed, — a true and honest heart :

"She was a beautiful girl of seventeen, well formed, and full of energy. Her eyes were large and blue, her complexion snow-white, with a delicate rose in her cheeks. Nature had been so bountiful to her in hair, that when she suffered the beautiful blond tresses to fall down, they formed a complete veil to her person. She, like all the Heger family, was accomplished and witty. The first time I saw her she was weaving a wreath of corn flowers, as blue as her own eyes. The crown is still mine ; and although the leaves have fallen out, they still retain the deep blue of her eyes. It was after a lonely afternoon walk, that I entered the counsellor's house with Rahbek, the poet, son-in-law of the family. The beautiful girl sat industriously at her needle, and when she raised her head at my entrance, I thought I read a certain pleasure in her eyes. An animated conversation ensued,

afterwards a good supper with good wine. Christiana was full of wit and humor."

For the want of a better word, I must translate Christiana's peculiar humor by the word *quizzing*. She was instantly alive to everything peculiar in the character or appearance of her friends, and with ready wit placed the peculiarity before them. Like all the Heger family, she possessed the talent of imitating the voice and manner of others, and gave to all her acquaintances pet names, indicating their peculiarities. For this species of wit, Cehlenschläger gave her the name of the Anabaptist.

After the delightful evening mentioned above, encouraged, we presume, by the glance of her blue eyes, the poet says he followed Christiana wherever she went to walk by star or moonlight. In these heavenly but embarrassing walks, the Anabaptist lost her inclination to quiz her companion. He says, "we went silently, arm in arm; I was one-syllabled, embarrassed, and very serious—Christiana also. At last love, that had so long robbed me of courage, gave it to me, and I came out stuttering with my timid declaration." Christiana, the joker, seems to have been well prepared for it. He says, "she understood my metaphors and aphorisms right well, and she did not leave me in despair." He was permitted to speak to her father.

This father was an extraordinary man; an easy man for the serious affairs of life. Before the bombardment of Copenhagen he was possessed of a large property. His beautiful house and splendid gardens were destroyed by that event. Although a lawyer and counsellor, he possessed many other talents. Our poet says he was a very good smith, joiner, and turner; an excellent horticulturist and ornamental gardener. His strawberries excelled those of the royal gardens.

He sketched beautifully. Thorwaldsen, when in Copenhagen, spent his evenings at his house, sketching with him for the instruction of his daughters. He was an accomplished musician, and when alone with the piano *phantazied*¹ so as to charm all who accidentally heard him. He ground glasses for telescopes, and wrote a treatise, in French, upon optics. He was familiar with the manufacture of the papier maché, and made beautiful articles, particularly snuff-boxes, whereon he painted lovely landscapes. His works in this art, which he also taught his daughters, were celebrated and sought for in other countries. Being expert in making fire-works, he often amused his friends by such exhibitions; but a young servant having been accidentally injured by the fall of one of his rockets, he abandoned this art. He was a courtier, and had taken part in the Italian opera, upon the court theatre.

Œhlenschlager approached this man of universal talents with great anxiety and timidity. He made an humble speech, setting forth his own small merits, which consisted, like Othello's, only in this, that he had loved and wooed his daughter; that he had nothing but his love, and the prospect and promise of his friend, that in two years' time he should finish his studies, and then he hoped to begin to earn his living. The father listened politely, rang the bell, called for his daughter, said a few words in her ear, placed her hand in that of her lover, and — changed the subject — whereby, says Œhlenschlager, “he did me a great service.” This transaction speaks well for the merit of Œhlenschlager, or we must presume that, if the father treated every subject as summarily as that of his daughter's happiness, his various accomplishments are not so wonderful.

¹ Improvized.

Cehlenschlager now studied his profession with more determined industry, but he could not resist the invitations of the muses. He was continually making hasty excursions to Parnassus, and indeed loitering there. At this time he wrote for the academic prize medal, upon the question, "Would our literature have been more beautiful, if it had been illustrated by the northern, rather than the Grecian, mythology?" This was his hobby-horse, and he mounted it accordingly. He says, with great simplicity, "I should have won the prize, if my essay had been the only one presented; but there were two others, of which one was in favor of the Grecian mythology, and the old professor gave that the preference."

It was of little consequence now, whether it were Apollo and the muses that drew him from his studies; the war broke out with England, and Mars or Thor coming to the aid of Freia,¹ the old heroic thirst for glory awoke in him, as in the whole nation. He joined, with others of the young students, the volunteer corps to defend Copenhagen against the fleet of Lord Nelson. After a year of interruption, he turned again to the study of law. At this time his studies in Danish and natural law were finished, but of the Roman law he knew nothing.

Since the death of his mother he had lived with the Ærstedes, under the care, as he says, of their nurse, a kind and indulgent matron, who held the place of a mother to these young men, who were merely boarders in her family. His manner of life was more satisfactory to himself than conducive to the study of the Roman law. It was his delight to assemble a multitude of students and young citizens around him, and sitting on a low stool in the midst, to read, or rath-

¹ The goddess of love of the northern mythology.

er to act, Holberg's Comedies, changing his voice and assuming each character in turn, to the universal delight and laughter of the company.

About this time, that is, in 1801 or 2, he was greatly surprised and delighted to hear of the betrothment of his dearest friend, Anders Œrsted, to his only sister, the little puppet formerly left by the stork, now grown to marriageable age. They had preserved their secret, he says, from him, to revenge his own cunning and abrupt betrothment to the counsellor's daughter. The marriage followed immediately, as his friend had been appointed assessor to the court, and city justice. This happy connection added greatly to the joy of their social and domestic life.

Some divisions had arisen in their club in consequence of the new school of German literature, the 'so-called romantic school. Œhlenschlager soon became a convert to the new school, but he withdrew somewhat from the club to a more domestic life. He gives a pleasant description of the circle in which he spent his evenings, consisting of the Œrstedes, and Rahbek, the poet, who had married the sister of his Christiana. He was the writer of the *Danish Observer*, a periodical, much esteemed at this time.

He says, "Our relation to Rahbek was peculiar. He had been the instructor of us all in taste and belles-lettres, and stood now at the head of the old classical school of literature; but he was as tolerant as he was obstinate. He would never dispute, but contrived to withdraw himself from our discussions by an anecdote or a witty conceit; if we persisted, he was silent, or looked at the prospect from his window; if we became warm and excited, he went to his study and his canary birds. When a glass of wine had restored our good

humor, he would again join us, and relate some of his characteristic anecdotes of former times, of which he had treasured a wonderful store, recollecting not only names and dates, but baptismal names, and imitating all the humorous peculiarities of the persons. In literary attainments he stood at the head of all his contemporaries, Baggesen only excepted, and he was the most fair and equitable of all.

“His wife, although many years younger, hung with full soul upon him, and, notwithstanding her own remarkable talents, had accustomed herself to implicit faith in his opinions. We young men found this so beautiful, that we did not seek to shake her faith in his infallibility. Fortunately her character was just adapted to her position. She rarely spoke of poetry. She possessed a noble heart, quick perceptions, extraordinary wit, and the greatest faculty in overcoming all mechanical difficulties. Wit and humor played always in her conversations ; imagination alone was wanting. If she was serious, she was almost melancholy. She understood all the modern languages, together with Latin and Greek ; but as she read books principally on account of the languages, her mind was not enriched with their literature, and it was not very agreeable to hear her speak long in the respective tongues. Her appreciation of the beautiful was more apparent in her paintings and in the art of gardening. Her beautiful garden was formed by herself. She sat much in her summer-house, surrounded by her splend fruits and flowers, while her wit and humor bloomed still more luxuriantly. She listened ‘roguishly’ to our disputes and controversies, but if we left a weak point of our argument exposed, or there was a link broken in the chain of our reasoning, Murat never came down quicker with his cavalry, than

she with her winged wit fell upon us with such slaughter that we could only come off with loud laughter, and broken limbs.

“ My sister was different, and yet in many things like the Rahbek. She was as lively, witty and *spirituelle*, but she had not the talent for languages, nor the mechanical skill, of her friend. She was very susceptible ; the joy of grief was well known to her, and, sometimes, almost led to melancholy. She made all her own clothes, and dressed herself with great taste. She walked much and well, while her friend Rahbek, on the contrary, sat always at home, or made short journeys to Hamburg. Neither of them loved an extensive society, but they collected daily a small circle of accomplished friends. My sister kept but one servant, and arranged her rooms herself, although, from her soft, white hands, no one would have suspected it. I had my corner in their houses, and read, almost every evening, something aloud to them. The works that they enjoyed the most, and over which we afterwards laughed and disputed, were Voss’s Homer, Tieck’s Don Quixote, Schlegel’s Spanish Theatre, Tieck’s and Novali’s writings, Goethe, Schiller and Shakspeare !

“ O beloved friends of my youth ! with whom I lived so many precious years, you are now both in eternity, and my earthly eyes will behold you no more. Pardon, if with too faint colors I have endeavored to draw, from memory, the resemblance of your characters. I would that the world should know something of your virtues ! ”

CĒhlenschlager continued to write and publish his poems, and “ *about this time*,” that is, about 1804, he published the Oriental Drama, and poem of Aladdin or the Wonderful

Lamp. This was written *con-amore*, having a close resemblance, he thinks, to his own life. In his poetical talent, he affirms, he had possession of a wonderful lamp, that opened to him all the treasures of the earth, while, in his vivid imagination, he possessed the power of the charmed ring. Like Aladdin also, (which seems to *us* less miraculous) he was in love. This publication obtained so much success, that he easily persuaded himself nature intended him for a poet, and for nothing else; that it was in vain to strive against an intention of nature, so distinctly pronounced. His bride was of the same opinion, and he resolved to leave the Roman law, and all other law, although both knew that in turning off from the great highway and beaten path of life to cross flowery meadows and untracked swamps, he left the secure road to future sustenance. But he seems always to have trusted Providence, and gone on his own way rejoicing.

He resolved, at first, to rely wholly upon his favorite studies, the old Sagas, and applied to the Academy of Art to allow him to give lectures upon the northern mythology. The painter Abildgaard, the director of the Academy, and instructor of Thorwaldsen, made the old objections to all northern idolatry, but Œhlenschläger maintained his own views with so much eloquence, that the scornful smile of the old man was changed into one of serious admiration. "Ach Gott," he said, "I am not the man to oppose anything that is new and spiritual."

He changed his plan, however, having heard that the countess Schimmelman had read his last poems with great satisfaction, and wished to see the author. He hastened therefore to her beautiful country house on the sea-shore. He says, "I waited long in the empty apartments, when at

last, a simply-dressed, friendly woman entered, and greeted me with diffidence, saying 'my husband will immediately be here.' " It was the countess herself. She soon made herself known, and from this time, to her death, she remained his liberal patroness. Through the influence of the count, her husband, he obtained from the crown prince a travelling pension, derived from the fund for the public service, and count Schimmelman became the trustee for the regular payment of the pension.

It seems to have been in Œhlenschlager's usual good fortune, (and one would believe that an uncommonly benevolent and intelligent stork must have watched his birth) that if he could only succeed through a patron, he should find a modest, gentle and unassuming woman, to hold that place, who seems to have demanded nothing in return.

SECOND PART.

WITH a hundred dollars in his pocket, given him by his father, our poet shipped, in the beginning of August, 1805, upon the packet-boat to Halle, intending to wait there for the first instalment of his pension, and then to proceed onwards as far as said pension would permit, even to the holy city of artists, the foster-mother of the soul — Rome herself. Œhlenschlager was now twenty-six years old. We give an anecdote from the very commencement of his journey, to show how the poet of twenty-six travelled: "Towards Quedlingburg, I travelled with a whole family — father,

mother and a number of lovely children. The father had been appointed postmaster in Quedlingburg, and they were approaching it for the first time, having left the home where the children were born. But as soon as a happy family are within four walls, they are again at home. It was a beautiful evening. 'See,' said the little boy to his father, 'there are the towers of Quedlingburg!' To me, who have such a tender feeling of domestic joys, and who, like the solitary bird, had left my own nest to roost upon strange branches it was indeed agreeable to meet these calm, idyllic joys, upon the post-wagon, and the reader will not think it strange that I was so occupied with this little family, that I forgot my portmanteau, containing all I possessed, and the loss of which I did not discover till the next day, in Halle."

He spent the winter in Halle, under the hospitable roof of a friend and countryman, and heard the lectures at the University, by Steffens in natural philosophy, by Wolff upon archæology, and by Schliermacher in ethics; with the latter, he formed a close intimacy. Schliermacher understood no Danish, and our poet translated for him his poems into German; this first excited his ambition to write in the sister language, and to become a German poet. Schliermacher, in return, translated for him the *Œdipus* in Colonna, word for word; he read it also in Greek, that *Œhlenschlager* might become familiar with the sound of the beautiful language.

The spring approached — the first quarter of his pension arrived, and he went as far as Berlin; where, the first evening, he met the noble and beautiful queen, Louisa, at the Redout, arrayed like *Psyche*, with wings attached to her shoulders. "Ah! it signified," he says, "that she would soon leave

this earth for her own celestial abode." In Berlin he became acquainted with Fichte, who thought him worthy to read and understand his philosophy.

After three weeks spent in Berlin, he hastened to Weimar, at that time the goal of all literary aspirants, and to Goethe the great autocrat. "He received me," says Oehlenschläger, "paternally, and I often dined with him. He made me read to him my *Aladdin* and *Hakon Jarl*, extemporizing them into German verse. Then he would say, when I used a Danish word, 'that is pretty.' But is that German? I asked. 'No, not German, but the languages may well make each other sisterly presents of good words.' " Goethe must have been amused by the enthusiastic poet, as an anecdote will prove.

"One day at the table, he spoke so warmly and with so much power for the honor and rights of the citizens in opposition to an affected courtier, who pretended to make a joke of the bravery or honor of a citizen, that when the courtier was gone I could not help falling upon his neck and kissing him." At this embrace, the stately Geheimrath cried out "Ja, Ja, dear Dane, you no doubt think well and justly too!"

To enjoy Goethe's society a few days longer he followed him to Jena, where the former rested on his journey to Carlsbad. "It was a sultry day, and, heated with walking, I quenched my thirst at an ice-cold fountain: I was instantly seized with intense pain in the breast, so that I could not enjoy the society of Goethe. I asked myself, have I, then, drunk my death in that cold fountain? But as I looked out of the window, I saw a splendid rainbow, in which the green stripe, the color of hope, was peculiarly brilliant. At this sight my fears vanished, and in a couple of days I was

quite well again. The incident of this day occurred to me when afterwards I wrote the fifth act of *Correggio*."

The 12th of June, our poet journeyed on to Dresden, eating larks at Leipsic on the way. In Dresden, he lived much in the accomplished Körner family, Theodore, afterwards the hero-poet, being then a pretty boy of fourteen years old. Körner's sister, Emma, was a lovely artist, and a young inmate of the family, an accomplished musician. In their company he visited the Dresden Gallery. I would gladly translate his views of art, but this notice would be thus too far extended.

He had joined a couple of his countrymen on their tour to Italy, and the day was fixed for their departure, but he would first indulge himself by running back to Weimar to take one more look at Goethe. "At this time," he says "I read no newspapers. I knew, indeed, that Prussia and France were at war, and that Napoleon had advanced his army between the Ulster and the Saale, but, as my friends, who were industrious newspaper readers, were not afraid, we ventured on to Weimar. I met Goethe the first evening at the theatre. 'Since you are here,' he said, 'where you certainly ought not to be, but since you *are* here—welcome!' It was not prudent to attempt to return, we resolved therefore to remain and wait the issue in Weimar.

"The Prussian head-quarters were at Weimar with the king and queen. The camp was just without the city. I went with Goethe through this wonderful movable city, full of little huts, where the bravest soldier must at least be peaceful through the darkness of night. The market-women appeared to me wonderfully acute; the wildest soldiers were indebted to them for care and solace: the market-men were nothing to them.

“ Now came the 14th of October.¹ We had long heard the cannonading ; at length there flew through the city officers and men by dozens, with reins hanging loose and horses flaked with foam and blood. ‘ Which is the way to the mountains ? ’ they cried ; ‘ where can we fly from the French ? ’ and without waiting answer they flew onward. A young Silesian officer, sorely wounded by a cannon ball, took refuge in our inn ; the French had robbed him of all his money. My fellow-traveller lent him a sum, and helped to take care of him. He died in two days, and my friend thought no more of it ; but the next year he received, unexpectedly, the whole sum lent, with many thanks from the family of the young officer in Silesia.

“ During the battle, I endeavored to read some chapters in *Peregrine Pickle* ; they ennuied and disgusted me ; I thought, how can one be so trivial in fiction and imagination, when reality is so serious and elevated ? ” Oehlenschlager seemed to have forgotten that life is not a continual battle of Jena.

“ The French now began to cannonade the city, and to draw nearer with their artillery. We placed ourselves for safety in the cellar, and looked out only from the steps, that we might not be wounded. The Prussian army had taken refuge in the city ; we foresaw that it would meet with the fate of Lubec. The money that was to serve us a half year in Paris we had received in good Louis-d’ors. We divided and concealed it in our neck-cloths, where, indeed, the French could easily have found it, had not chance peculiarly favored us.

“ Suddenly it was as silent in Weimar as the grave.

. ¹ The day of the battle of Jena.

The shops and windows were closed, and the streets empty. The October sun shone through the lurid smoke of the cannon, like a pale wintry moon. The French entered in companies, at first, in perfect order, and quartered themselves in the houses. Our host lost his head entirely, took his little son in his arms; and cried like a child. We advised him to throw all open, and then go out, with courage, to meet the advancing troops. Eight genteel people, burnt by the sun, and covered with dust and sweat, halted in the doorway: 'Bourgeois,' they cried, 'du vin! de l'eau de vie! du kirs-wasser!' The host came with bottles; they put the necks to their lips and emptied them; then alighted and entered the apartment. They were all sub-officers. We showed them our passports, and relied upon our Danish neutrality: they assured us we had nothing to fear. 'The Prussians,' they said, 'fight well, but they do not understand war.' For the first hour, although the city was crowded with foreign troops, perfect stillness prevailed; the weary soldiers were refreshing themselves and resting from the battle; but in the evening, when the plunder began, the true horror of war commenced. These brave French officers defended our quarters from plunder.

"In the upper story, my companions and myself had secured a little chamber: I threw myself, wearied, upon the sofa, while they took possession of a small bed. In the night I was awaked; the apartment was as light as day. I stepped to the window: the city was on fire, and the shrieks were the despairing cries of women and children. Now began the horrors of war. The city was completely plundered. The next day, Generals Berthier and Augereau took possession of our whole house, from garret to cellar: we had to content ourselves with a rind of bread and a glass of wine, while the

French officers wasted and consumed at their pleasure ; but we had the consolation of enjoying their protection, so that we escaped the common plunder.

When Napoleon entered the city the ravages ceased. A severe prohibition was issued against all plunder or robbery. Eight or ten times a day the sudden echo of a volley of musketry in the Park announced the execution of one of his army taken in the act of plundering the inhabitants." The Danish travellers saved their *Louis-d'ors*.

"Goethe was married during the battle, in order, if any misfortune happened to himself, to secure his inheritance to his only son." "We dined with him," *Oehlenschläger* adds, "and then hastened to quit a city, which, from a seat of the muses, had become a Lazaretto of wounded soldiers."

Our poet hastened with his friends to Paris. He seems not to have entered very fully into the amusements of the capital. He found in the great libraries there, books, rare books, relating to his favorite study, the northern mythology, and wrote his tragedy of *Palnakote*. Otherwise he spent his time in almost domestic privacy, having found a Norwegian family, with which he lived in the northern simplicity of his own country, making the acquaintance, however, of many literary men, and diligently studying the language of the capital. After spending eighteen months in this manner, his funds, that is, his pension, was at an end. His hostess, Madame Gautier, from Geneva, possessed a liberality of spirit seldom found in the landladies of hired lodgings. "*Monsieur Oesling*," she said, for she could not pronounce my name, "if you remained with me two years, and I received no penny from you, I would not allow you to go, for I perceive that I may trust you. You will not deceive me. Take, then, my upper chamber, and your expenses will be less by a quar-

ter : you will fare as well, and you shall pay me when you can."

I removed accordingly to the seventh story, where I could overlook the Tuilleries and the iron horses that had galloped from Greece, Venice, Berlin, and paused now in Paris."

His resources at length being wholly exhausted, he packed his manuscripts together, and with a small borrowed sum journeyed back to Germany, to offer them to Cotta, the generous publisher. He obtained a passport; but forgot to have the name of Fouché, the French police inspector, upon it; he was, therefore, detained eight days at Strassburg; but here he also met with good fortune, beside having an opportunity to study the glorious cathedral. When he reached Stuttgart and paid his fare, he had not a single sou left. He called on Cotta, and found he would be absent for three weeks, at one of the Brunnens of Germany. "My courage, however," he says, "did not fail. I told the host of the hotel where I stopped, that I had business with Dr. Cotta, and would remain at his house till he returned from Baden; he thanked me many times, and I felt perfectly at ease." Here, also, while he waited for Cotta, Œhlenschlager met with some agreeable circumstances, and with his usual good fortune.

Cotta returned, took his poems and paid him for the copyright, and with this sum he departed for Switzerland and Italy.

Œhlenschlager had been introduced to M^{me} de Staël, at her villa, near Paris, but as he then spoke scarcely a word of French, and she no German, their acquaintance proceeded not far. At Geneva, as he had received a friendly invitation from her, he determined to visit her at Coppet. "I entered," he says, "a dark inn, and ordered some bundles of

fagots to be kindled in the chimney, to change the air of the damp autumn evening, and sat before the blaze thinking of my vanished joys. I had written a note to M. Schlegel, and waited for an answer. I did not wait long; a servant entered with a friendly written invitation from M^{me} de Staël, took my portmanteau, and led the way to the chateau. Here all was elegant and cheerful. The lady came in the most friendly manner, smiling to meet me, and invited me to spend some weeks at the chateau. She joked me that I spake no better French. But we had now little embarrassment, for the lady had learned to speak German, and her son, Auguste, and her accomplished daughter, M^{me} de Broglie, then a young girl, understood and spoke the German and French." Here he met Benjamin Constant, Schlegel, Sismondi, the Baron Boight, Count Sabran, Chammisso, all, apparently, living at the table, if not in the house, of the celebrated hostess. If any proof were wanting of the good nature, the goodness of heart, of M^{me} de Staël, it would be the kindness with which she entertained, and the friendliness with which she advanced the interests of these smoking, travelling young men of all nations. Œhlenschlager had been a few weeks there; the winter came on with some severity; M^{me} de Staël represented to him the folly and danger of crossing the Alps at that season; advised him to take an Italian master, and prepare himself with a knowledge of the language, pass the winter at her chateau, and cross the Alps in the spring. Œhlenschlager says, "I found this very reasonable and friendly, thanked her, and remained."

"After a few days Werner entered, bowing into the saloon, with an immense snuff-box in his waistcoat pocket, and his nostrils bearing marks of its frequent use. His bad French amused M^{me} de S., but in his own peculiar patois he held

lectures every day after dinner, upon his mystical esthetics. Their hostess listened with great attention, and hardly escaped becoming a proselyte to Werner's mysticism. She scolded the others that they did not listen with more devout humility to the outpourings of the inspired philosopher!

“How animated, *spirituelle*, witty and amiable was our hostess, is well known to the world. Pretty she was not; her large, brilliant, brown eyes possessed much attraction, and she displayed eminently the feminine talent of winning the other sex, and through penetrating *finesse*, uniting differing characters peaceably under her empire. Her genius, her face, and her voice were masculine, but her soul was eminently feminine.

“At this time she was writing her book upon German literature, and read it to us every evening. It has been said that she had never read the books upon which she passed judgment, but was indebted for her opinions to Schlegel. This was not true. She read German with great ease, and her judgments were her own. Schlegel, indeed, had great influence with her, but she thought for herself, and often differed from him. She has written much that is good and beautiful upon German literature, but she wanted the deep, quiet and earnest mind to penetrate the peculiar genius of German poetry and philosophy.

“The peculiar talent of M^{me} de Staël consisted in saying always something piquant and striking. This made her a very agreeable companion. Whenever she appeared, spite of the young and the beautiful, she drew all men of head or heart into her circle. When it is recollected that she was very hospitable, and gave excellent dinners, it is no wonder that, like a queen or fairy in her enchanted castle, she drew all

men to submit to her rule, while for her sceptre, sitting at her table, she held in her fingers a small twig of green leaves. This was as necessary to her conversation as her knife and fork to her food. The servant laid a fresh twig daily near her cover.

“When the spring approached, and the birds again fluttered, I spread my wings, also, to cross the Alps. M^{me} de Staël wrote in my Album.

“J’introduis pour la première fois le français dans ce livre ; mais bien que Goethe l’eut appelé une langue perfide, j’espere, mon cher Œhlenschlager, que vous croirez à mon amitié pour vous, et à ma vive estime pour l’auteur d’Axel et Valburg.”

At length, the 9th of March, 1809, Œhlenschlager journeyed in the diligence, in order to cross the Alps to Italy. In Parma, he visited the church of St. Joseph and St. John, and saw the frescoes of Correggio. The church was filled with kneeling figures. He says “it would have been affected in me to have knelt,” but he placed himself in a corner, and prayed this prayer. “Dear God, make my heart open and pure, so that I may see the greatness, goodness and beauty in nature, and in the works of man. Preserve my country, my king, my beloved, and my friends ! Let me not die in a strange land, but return happily to my home. Give me cheerfulness and courage to wander upon thy beautiful earth, without bitterness or hatred to my neighbors, without servile and cowardly subjection to the judgments of others. Dear God ! permit me to be a good poet. Thou hast formed my soul for art. It is the dearest and truest medium through which I can come to thee. Grant that my works, like those of this good Correggio, may live after I am no more ! that when I am

dust, many youthful hearts may be excited and warmed by my thoughts." "Here," he says, "standing under this cupola, I first formed the resolutions—I had thought of it in Paris—to write a drama upon the life of Correggio. It was confirmed by the little picture over the fireplace of the ducal palace, in Modena, painted when the artist was only seventeen years old. In this exquisite picture, the holy child sits upon its mother's lap, while an angel offers him cherries upon a plate. The beauty, loveliness and innocence in Maria's and the angel's faces, cannot be exceeded. Joseph and another figure are near. Joseph holds in his hand a child's plaything. Two little rabbits play at the feet of the angel. Young myrtles bloom in the back ground. Had Correggio left nothing else in art, it would be sufficient to establish the tender relation to his wife and child, that I have preserved in the tragedy, as an historical truth."

In Rome, he lived much with his own countrymen, especially with Thorwaldsen. Thorwaldsen belongs to all nations; but he afterwards deprecated the practice of natives of the same country, hanging, like one family, together. His northern constitution suffered much from the heat of Rome, where, in the surrounding fields, the grasshoppers lay like snow upon the ground; he withdrew, therefore, with one of his countrymen, to Grotto Ferrata, where, in a dilapidated house, that had once been a Roman villa, they were in want of everything, except cool and fresh air. They could get neither milk nor butter, and what seemed to the young men more important, although the hostess was much amazed at the luxury, these young Danes desired, but could not get, their shirt-frills plaited. Here, in this retirement, he wrote the most admired and celebrated of his works, the Drama of Correggio.

“In the execution of his plan, OEhlenschlager adopted Vasaris’s account of Correggio’s death, as the groundwork of the piece. The delineation of the artist’s character is singularly beautiful. The mild and sensitive painter is brought into striking contrast with the daring and sublime genius of Michael Angelo. The picture of domestic life and love, graced by congenial tastes for art, and enthusiasm in its pursuit, was never drawn with more simplicity, truth, beauty and felicity, than in this exquisite drama.”

Although OEhlenschlager adopted Vasaris’s account of the death of Correggio as authentic, he does not intend his representation for an exact portrait of Correggio, but has taken such poetical license as poets permit themselves, such as Goethe has taken with Tasso and Iphigenia. It cannot be supposed, that, after Correggio had painted such celebrated pictures as his Night, his Magdalene, and his Madonna, he could have remained as ignorant of the great and splendid pictures of the great masters, as he is represented in the beautiful soliloquy, in the picture gallery of Octavio. But this does not interfere with the design of the drama, which was, as he says, “to represent the amiable, natural genius of the artist, in contrast with the severe strength and gigantic power of one, accomplished by study, as in Michael Angelo; and also to represent the sensitive and retired artist in contention with the actual world, its rough realities and selfish pursuits. The refined artist meets in Baptista, with the envious and jealous enmity of a vulgar soul, and in Octavio, with the ignorant and conceited patron, whose selfish and ignoble views the pure and generous Antonio can with difficulty comprehend. On the other hand, the soul-elevating genius of the artist, in his lovely picture of the Magdalene, produces a

softening and humanizing result upon the most hardened and vicious class of men, changing the ferocious passions of robbers and murderers into reverence and gratitude, and causing blessing to be returned for cursing, by rescuing the life of the son of his mortal enemy. Although the bold and confident spirit of an assured and world-famed artist suddenly overpowers the sensitive painter, and plunges him into a momentary despair, the beautiful episode of Celestina and the laurel wreath, are an assurance that he is consecrated to immortality even here ; and the spirit that could not contend with the heavy burthen of mortality, departs, supported by the arms of perfect love, attended by reverence and gratitude, while religion, in the person of the hermit, assures him of an immortal heaven for the soul."

Œhlenschlager had now been more than two years absent from his country and his betrothed. The natives of northern climates, the Norwegians and Danes, especially the cultivated among the latter, seem always to languish and thirst for the bright skies and sunny fruits of the "land where the orange and citron trees bloom." Yet they soon feel that yearning *heimweh*, that drives them, like their own familiar stork and domestic swallow, back to the north, faithful to the snow-covered nest under the eaves, and the old chimney of the smoky roof, consecrated to their simple, domestic joys.

Œhlenschlager's usual good fortune attended him upon his home journey. He met an agreeable Danish traveller, who was glad of his society as *compagnion du voyage*, and paid the expenses of the journey. As they reached the boundary of Italy, he sprang joyfully over. He says his northern heart longed for the north, for in the sultry air of the south

he had felt like a mouse under the exhausted air-pump. He paused in Germany but long enough to see Goethe, and read to him his *Correggio*. "Unfortunately I could stay but two days in Weimar, and with Goethe, one must wait for good humor, as the sailor on the strand waits for a good wind. Goethe received me politely, but coldly, and almost like a stranger. Had, then, so many intervening experiences erased the memory of those precious hours I had spent with him, eternally remembered by me, or did it only slumber, and would it again awake? I sought to suppress the pain, and hoped, after he had heard my *Correggio*, the old relation between us would ensue." The poet asked leave, through Reimer, to read his tragedy, but Goethe desired the manuscript to be sent to him; unfortunately the writing was illegible to any but the author. Goethe, however, invited him to dinner, and, he says, "as Goethe would not permit me to be childlike and heartlike, I was bold and satirical. I recited a couple of epigrams, that I have never suffered to be printed. Goethe said, very good humoredly, 'He who can make good wine should make no vinegar?' 'Have you, then, Herr Geheimerath, made no vinegar?' 'The devil,' said Goethe; 'because I have made it, is it then right?' 'No, but when wine is made, many grapes fall to the ground that are good for nothing but for the vinegar of wine.'

"If I had only had time, and could have read my piece, the old relation would have returned. But I must forth, and so we took a cold leave. I opposed it in my deepest soul, for there was no man I loved and valued more than Goethe, and now, perhaps, I should never see him again. The post horses were ordered at five in the morning, and it was now half past eleven. I sat troubled in my room, tears in my eyes;

an irresistible longing seized me to press him once more to my heart ; at the same time the proud feeling struggled in my breast, that I would not humble myself before him. I ran to Goethe's house, there were yet lights burning, and I went to Reimer's chamber. Dear friend ! can I not speak with Goethe ? I would willingly say to him, farewell ! As he saw my emotion, he understood all. 'I will see whether he is yet in bed.' He came back, and told me to enter. The author of Goetz, and of Herman and Derothea, stood in his night-gown, and wound up his watch before stepping into bed. When he saw me, he said in a friendly tone, 'My dear, you come like Nicodemus, in the night.' 'Permit me,' said I, 'to say to the poet Goethe, an eternal farewell.' 'Fare-you-well, my child,' he answered, kindly, and I left the chamber. I never saw him again, nor wrote to him, but I named my eldest son for him, and know that he has always spoken in the most friendly manner of me."

Ehlenschlager was warmly welcomed on his return to Copenhagen. His bride had been faithful to him. He soon had the honor of reading his Correggio to the king and royal family, in the royal cabinet, and shortly after he was appointed professor extraordinary of esthetics, in the University of Copenhagen.

The Baron Schimmelman lent him a pretty house in Christiansholm, half a mile from the city, upon the margin of the little sea. In a beautiful spring morning, he went alone with his betrothed into the church of a little village, on the sea-side, called Gjentofte, where, by appointment, the preacher was waiting for them. He joined their hands, and asked God's blessing on their union. They returned, as man and wife, to their home in Christiansholm.

Æhlenschlager was now thirty years old, and here his minute autobiography ceases. His serious life began where that of romances end, with his marriage. His life was uniform and happy. Every year, from 1810 to 1829, with the exception of 1817, he gave a course of lectures to the students of the University, and sometimes repeated them to the *beau monde* of Copenhagen. They included his favorite studies, the northern mythology, old Danish lyrics, Roman literature and dramatic authors, from Sophocles to Tieck. In 1829, in an excursion to Sweden, he had the honor of having the laurel-crown placed upon his brows, by the celebrated poet, Bishop Tegner, in the ancient cathedral of Lunds, in the presence of the assembled people.

For so celebrated a poet, Æhlenschlager seems to have lived remarkably free from envy, and from enemies. In the sketch of his life, taken from the *Foreign Quarterly Review*,¹ it is said that he waged a bitter literary warfare with the poet Baggesen. It is fair that his own account should be read. Baggesen had lived much in the family of his sister Ærsted, and a half-grown son of his had been cherished more than two years in the house of the poet's father. While Æhlenschlager was absent, Baggesen printed and sent him a poetical epistle, that professed to do homage to his talents, while it contained concealed and bitter satire. When he came to Paris, Æhlenschlager resolved to meet him with coldness and reserve, but the insinuating charm of Baggesen's manners, his wit and eloquence soon disarmed, as it always did, the anger of others. Afterwards, it was Baggesen that waged the bitter war against our author. He says, in con-

¹ See *Poets and Poetry of Europe*.

clusion, "Many delightful hours have I passed with this remarkable man. The good that he has done me, I remember with lively gratitude; the evil, I have forgotten. I have planted a violet upon his grave, and will never sow a thistle there. Had he willed it, I could always have remained his friend." He devotes nearly a chapter in his autobiography to the defence of his Correggio, against the severe criticism of Tieck. "It would be cowardly in artists, as in soldiers," he says, "to pocket the slightest offence," and he seems to make good his cause against the critic.

Øhlenschläger has published many works in Danish, and in German. With the exception of Correggio and Hakon Jarl, they seem deficient in true and deep pathos, and not to be thoroughly penetrated with heat from within. His lamp is fed with pure oil, and burns with a bright and moderate flame, but the heat and light is not evolved by the internal conflict that burns and consumes. He compares himself to the Borsdorf apple, which is tender, well-flavored, and fair, but is covered with little brown spots, by which it is always recognized. The spots, in his own estimation of himself, are his Danish idioms and peculiarities, by which the Germans instantly detect his foreign origin. The amusing vanity, the childish simplicity, and harmless egotism, with which, notwithstanding all that is great, and lovely, and genuine in his character, he records every compliment and every slight honor he receives, are, to the reader of his biography, the skin-deep spots, by which the genuine Borsdorfer is known.

The drama of Sappho, although, perhaps, inferior to Correggio in domestic interest, and less artistically perfect, has even a deeper significance in representing the poet and the

woman, not so much in contention with the actual world as with her own heart. In this drama the truth is beautifully, but sorrowfully developed, that every unequal union avenges itself, sooner or later, for this violation of nature, in inevitable, but bitter disappointment ; that no gift of genius, no elevation of position, can conceal or soften the stern inflexibility, or alter the immutable relations of God's laws. Splendid gifts of genius, such as Sappho possessed, separated her more widely from others, than even time itself. She was as much alone, as though she had lived centuries before Phaon, and like a shade, had returned into his world of youth and love, where there was no longer a response for her, and the only answer to the spirit's cry was " alone, alone ! "

The cry of genius in woman for sympathy, is older than the time of Sappho, and has been heard from thence to our own time.

" Thou hast a charmed cup, O fame !
A draught that mantles high !
Away, to me, a woman, bring
Sweet water from affection's spring.
A hollow sound is in thy song,
A mockery in thy eye,
To the sick heart that doth but long
For aid, for sympathy ! "

It seems to the translator, that, from the two dramas taken together, the position and character of woman, under Pagan and Christian ideas, are well illustrated. Sappho, — endowed with the most beautiful genius ; a poet, uniting in herself the most precious gifts of nature, with the rarest intellectual culture ; adored by the people ; possessing all but the one wish

of her heart, — in ungovernable rage and jealousy, draws the dagger upon the child of her dearest love. Had not Paganism done all for Sappho that it could do for woman? May not Sappho be taken as an example of the highest form of development of the intellect and the heart, that woman could attain under the Grecian culture? But how does she fade away when contrasted with the divine beauty of the Madonnas of the Christian church! and, although it may be said that the Madonnas of the church present only one phase of woman's character, there must have been a complete change of ideas, to render such celestial loveliness, patient calmness, and serene humility, the objects of general adoration. How do the ideal pictures of the Christian church reveal the deep sanctuary of woman's soul, as an ever-living fountain of human love! The new revelation to woman, the new faith that redeemed her youth from the idolatry of the senses, and sheltered her old age from lonely and desolate contempt, is the only faith that could idealize the serene and calm beauty of the saints of the church, and the more kindred we become to the divine religion of Christ, the more celestial will be the beauty, the more firm and noble, spiritual and holy, the character, of woman.

CORREGGIO.

PERSONS.

ANTONIO ALLEGRI, *painter.*

MARIE, *his wife.*

GIOVANNI, *his son.*

MICHAEL ANGELO, } *celebrated artists.*
JULIO ROMANO, }

OCTAVIO, *a nobleman of Parma.*

RICORDANO, *a nobleman of Florence.*

CELESTINA, *his daughter.*

SILVESTRO, *a hermit.*

BAPTISTA, *an inn-keeper.*

FRANZ, *his son.*

VALENTINO, NICOLO, *and other robbers.*

LAURETTA, *a peasant girl.*

MESSENGER.

CORREGGIO;

A TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Village of Correggio. In the background, a wood. Upon the right, a large Inn. On the left Antonio's cottage, in which he sits, and paints. His wife sits near with Giovanni, his little son, who stands at her knees with the Agnus Dei staff in his hand.

ANTONIO.

Be quiet, boy, till I am ready, then
Shall you play again.

GIOVANNI.

Is not, dear father,
The Giovanni in the picture ready?

ANTONIO.

Yes.

GIOVANNI.

And mother too ?

ANTONIO.

And mother also.

GIOVANNI.

Dear mother ! thou art there, Marie. I'm
Giovanni ! my father, as we stand,
He paints us in the picture. The little
Jesus child, that in my father's picture
Sleeps on thy lap — where's he ?

MARIE.

He is in heaven.

GIOVANNI.

My father, can he see him there ? ,

MARIE.

He thinks
Of him, and feels how beautiful he was.

GIOVANNI.

[*Reflectingly.*

Because he was the best of all the children ?

MARIE.

Ah ! yes, indeed.

ANTONIO.

Be quiet, Giovanni.

GIOVANNI.

A painter shall I ever be, my father ?

ANTONIO.

Be diligent, and we 'll perhaps indulge thee.

GIOVANNI.

O, father ! so I shall be.

[Silvestro, the hermit, comes from the wood. As he sees Antonio painting he approaches unobserved and looks at the picture.]

SILVESTRO.

How beautiful !

GIOVANNI.

[To the hermit.

My father says, I too shall be a painter.

[Antonio turns and rises to meet Silvestro.]

Ah ! reverend brother, welcome !

SILVESTRO.

Be not
Disturbed, keep at your work, the colors dry.

ANTONIO.

No, for this time it is enough. The boy,
Dear friend, no longer can keep still.
Young blood must still be moving.

SILVESTRO.

Yes ! 't is so.
Ah, how splendid is that lovely painting !

ANTONIO.

For you I've something finished ; for your cell.

SILVESTRO.

Have you indeed remembered me ?

ANTONIO.

Dear friend,
The little thing is ready. Willingly
I'd give the larger picture. But we must live ;
And I, for means to live, must sell my work.

SILVESTRO.

Antonio ! Dear master Anton ! heartily
I thank you ! This small picture is indeed

Too much for me. I need it not. Nature,
Great nature is my picture. The oak wood,
Without, is full of God ! There, the divine
Is manifest. 'The palace and the church
From nature far removed ; the noble's hall,
When filled with levity and pride, they
Need the aid of pictures. The artist, then,
Alone, can kindle the divine in man !

ANTONIO.

Think you great art can this accomplish ?

SILVESTRO.

The lovely arch it is, the rainbow bridge
Spanned between earth and heaven.

ANTONIO.

That only
Can religion be.

SILVESTRO.

She stands invisible.

A cherub she, her feet upon the ground,
Bearing upon her wings gay fancy's sports.

ANTONIO.

Ah, God ! To thee indeed but fancy's sports !
I'll fetch the picture. *[Goes out.]*

[*As Antonio goes out Silvestro turns quickly to Marie, and asks,*]

Marie ! how stands it with Antonio's health ?

MARIE.

O Heaven ! you see how pale he is.

SILVESTRO.

[child !

That will not hurt him. Distress thee not, my
Long months have past since, by the hemorrhage
He suffered ?

MARIE.

Ah, yes.

SILVESTRO.

It left no trace ?

MARIE.

None !

SILVESTRO.

Fear not ! The little wound has healed itself.
Be not too anxious. Antonio is young,
Nature in him is kind and healing, though
Susceptible and rash as artists are.
The kindling fire, not merely warms, it burns ;
Yet passion never with the vulture's claw

Seizes upon him ; a gentle flame, it
Rises, fanned by the air, and soon again
Extinguished. He must live calm and cheerful.
Is he not so ?

MARIE.

Alas ! he is too good ;
His nature is too gentle for the world ;
Like art, a pure and brilliant flame, dimmed
Is its light by every passing cloud.
Father ! To you alone I can impart —
I shall not keep him long ; I feel it here.
[Pressing her hand on her heart.]

SILVESTRO.

Marie ! my child ! These are but fancies.
You weep !

MARIE.

I shall not keep him long ! his soul
Strives from the earth to free itself. A cloud
Alone this life's to him, on which the sun
Of immortality reflects its light.

SILVESTRO.

Does he not love thee, then ?

MARIE.

Ah, yes, he loves.

SILVESTRO.

His child ? Does he not love his child ?

MARIE.

Ah, yes,

He loves, as fathers love !

SILVESTRO.

He loves, too, all

That's lovely ?

MARIE.

God knows he does.

SILVESTRO.

Do not then weep !
Trust God, and hope ! For strife to quit this earth,
'T is all too soon. The artists' life belongs
To nature. The visible, the fair, they love.
They, like the fearless eagle, soar above
The mountain's cloud-capt head, but dare not quit
The warmer skies, where the ethereal soul
Is fed with subtler food. Nature, in this,
Is true. Life must love life ; and gray old age
Looks without terror to the desert grave.

MARIE.

Antonio comes.

SILVESTRO.

Let him not see thee sad.

ANTONIO. [*with a small picture.*

This is thy picture, reverend father !

SILVESTRO.

Ah ! a meek, repentant *Magdalena* !

ANTONIO.

Like you she hastens to the dusky wood,
But not from love like yours, seeking to soothe
In solitude her pious, weary heart.
She is a sinful woman, but repentant,
And like the timid fawn, she seeks the thicket,
There to escape from treacherous snares.
To me, 't is lovely to behold a woman,
Though fallen, lift herself upright again ;
With us, how few there are can do it.
Thus, in the midst of beauty shall she dwell
A consecrated saint. Both beautiful
And fair she was ; a goddess shall she be ;
A wood divinity ! accept it kindly.

SILVESTRO.

You artists never can forget the old
Idolatry. A goddess, mean you ?

ANTONIO.

Goddess or saint ! for the same thing, two names.
The good is holy ; the holy brings us good.

SILVESTRO.

Ah ! is that your meaning ? How lovely
Is the painting ; with what artistic skill
Have you combined in graceful harmony
The elements of most opposing beauty.
The deeply-shaded wood, the golden hair,
The soft, fair skin, and drapery of blue ;
Of youth the fulness, and the naked skull,
The lovely face, and the great book !

ANTONIO.

I'm glad you're pleased.

SILVESTRO.

Within my little cell 't will always hang.
There in the morning blush of early light
'T will beam upon me in my matin prayer !
God will reward you ! I can never !
A solitary man I dwell alone !
These herbs take kindly ; their juice is healthful ;
Like a warm cordial they will heal your breast.
Evening and morning, when I kneel
Before this saint, at the first beam of light,
And when the sun goes down, my prayers

And yours together rising, nature will add
Her healing balsam to the herb.

ANTONIO.

Thanks ! My

Thanks, I love a morning draught.

SILVESTRO.

Now farewell !

ANTONIO.

[detaining him.]

Once more, a moment, yet once more allow !

Has it not caught a little blemish ?

[he looks fondly at the picture.]

Ah, no ! 't is pure, so — good — farewell ! once
[more !]

SILVESTRO.

Farewell ! again most heartily I thank you.

[he goes.]

*[During this conversation the little Giovanni
draws with chalk upon the neighbor's wall.]*

ANTONIO.

It grieves me thus to part my pictures

From myself ! a cherished child it seems,

With me so confidential it has been !

A portion of my soul ! The poet's happy,

The children of his soul are always near.

The painter's poor, his children he must leave

In this world orphans ; desolate they are —
The boy, what does he ? Fresco paints upon
Our neighbor's wall. Thou foolish boy, forbear
To draw the leg thus ! [*helps him*] So — it is better.
Ha, ha ! the villain ! Give him a feather
In his cap.

GIOVANNI.

A sabre, father ! and a sabre ?
I will myself the sabre draw.

ANTONIO.

So — right long and crooked.
[*Baptista comes out from the inn and looks on.*]

BAPTISTA.

There 's the old man
Like to the child ; instead of punishing
He helps to soil the wall. Antonio !
Do you hear ?

ANTONIO.

[*embarrassed.*]

Master Baptista ! my good neighbor !
Take it not ill. Oft have I checked the boy ;
Yes, often.

BAPTISTA.

And you yourself assist him ! ha !

ANTONIO.

The leg he made too long ; yes, far too long.
Take it not ill. Who can it harm, indeed,
That like a sentinel the fellow stands
With brave moustache upon your wall ? Thieves
He will frighten ; robbers, from the house.

BAPTISTA.

You'll scarcely frighten thieves. Let my wall
stand !
And if the boy you do not punish,
I, myself will do it.

ANTONIO.

Be not angry.
Can a child thus stir up your anger ?
Instinct, thus early in that boy unfolds ;
Spontaneous 't is ; unconquerable !
It moves his fingers, tingles in his blood.
He can but paint. Thus the young cygnet
Moves to the water ; the bird so tries its
New-fledged wing. The water and the air
Allure the bird, as color does the boy.

BAPTISTA.

They are but tricks. My Franz has shown his
taste
By scrawling on a wall. *He* is well taught ;

A quiet, docile child. A painter
Shall he be, in Rome.

ANTONIO.

In Rome ! a painter !

BAPTISTA.

Yes, in Rome ; an artist, form'd from true rules ;
Painting from knowledge ; and when he has
learnt
All he can learn, to Raffael I shall send him.

ANTONIO.

Raffael, among the illustrious dead
For eighteen years has rested.

BAPTISTA.

All are not dead !
And I have gold ; money I'll spare not.
Once more, in Italy it is the fashion
That all must paint. Pencils I'll purchase ;
Canvass and colors ; palettes and brushes ;
For fatal 't is to art when poverty
Denies such helps.

ANTONIO.

Most true ! when 't is as now,
The poverty of mind.

BAPTISTA.

What would you say ?

ANTONIO.

Think you the pencil makes the painter ?
Trust me, the brush alone creates no art.

BAPTISTA.

My Franz will be an artist, spite of your word.
Not just a village daub, that by the day
Is hired.

ANTONIO.

But in the night ? That can I do.

BAPTISTA.

Ah ! yes, your foolish fancies ; wherein, alas,
There shines no genius. You paint the child
To sparkle like the glowworm.

ANTONIO.

Godlike art !

Blaspheme it not ! What do you know of art ?
To comprehend the God, yourself must be divine ;
To know God's will, you must obey ! A man,
Self-taught I am. I have not dared myself
To place by the side of th' immortal heads,
Whose glorious works charm and enlighten

The whole world. Their works I know not. Na-
I trust, has formed me for the art ; for this [ture,
I take no sneer, and none deserve.

BAPTISTA.

You think
That foolish work for a great price will sell ?

ANTONIO.

Baptist ! you are mine honored host ! Bravo !
A famous cook you are ! Bravissimo !
Worthy of honor and renown, as cook !
Me and my precious wife you 've often fed ;
I am to you a little sum in debt.
Patience ! the picture soon will bravely sell !
Let not ill humor then divide us long.
If Franz an artist cannot now succeed,
He is not wholly lost. Not genius always
Can ensure success, and every man
Dare not the effort make ; there are who would
Themselves be painted. Once more, have pa-
With me ; be not ungenerous, but trust ; [tience
To-morrow and to-day let me have food ;
Next day I 'll pay you all I owe.

BAPTISTA.

Forbear !
No morsel shall you have till all is paid.

ANTONIO.

Alas ! I cannot beg ! I'd hunger sooner.

[*A messenger arrives from Rome with a letter for Baptista. He opens it and looks at the signature.*]

BAPTISTA.

From Master Luke, the teacher of my son.
Now you will learn how wrong your judgment is.

ANTONIO.

Is this the first you have received from him ?

BAPTISTA.

It is. But surely 't will not be the last

ANTONIO. [*speaking to himself.*]

Luke is well known — he is an honest man,
A wise, a true, and faithful master.

[*To Baptista.*]

Baptist ! Wilt take the wager, Master Luke
Thinks of your son precisely as I do ?

BAPTISTA.

How ?

ANTONIO.

We'll wage about the midday dinner.

BAPTISTA.

And if you lose — what shall I gain by that ?

ANTONIO.

Then, I will give in lieu, my finished work,
The last and best one, for a mid-day meal,
If Lucas grants your son will be a painter.

BAPTISTA.

You are a man, both foolish and vain-minded,
Complain not then, if you should lose your work.

ANTONIO. [*offers him his hand.*]

O, surely not. Our wager — shall it hold ?

BAPTISTA.

I am content. Our hands we need not give ;
That, do we to our friends alone.

ANTONIO.

I am
Still less your enemy, than Franz a painter.

BAPTISTA.

That shall we see. [*He reads.*] “ Take back your
son. Nature
Has not designed him for a painter ; in vain
You lavish gold upon him.” [*he stops from anger.*]

ANTONIO.

That I knew well, although I did not say so ;
A bungler, too, can sometimes truly guess.
Be glad, an upright man like Master Luke,
Whose honest hands will never rob your son
Of precious time, nor steal from you your gold,
Has saved you from another. Take your son
Let him at home be helpful to you. [back.
In every view 't is better and more gainful.
Therein you 'll find your best account. Patience !
We meet again. Forget the wager not.
I would not name 't if hunger did not press.
[Goes.

BAPTISTA.

[Alone, reads the letter.

"Take your son Francis home. He is condemned."

And this poor wight will boast and triumph thus,
While I stand by, and cannot say him nay.
Ah, now I know, how I can shame the churl
And make him humble. Here stands my castle,
There his cottage ; no stranger turns within
My house, that does not visit him — to view
His jugglery. They speak far more of him
In foreign towns than of my inn.

[Octavio comes from the inn.

A courtier

Comes, I must be gay ; they love not serious
People.

OCTAVIO.

How goest Baptista ? what ! art dull ?
What hast thou there ? A love epistle ? Ei !
Thy mistress then has given thee the basket.

BAPTISTA.

Not me. 'T is my son Franz, my Lord !

OCTAVIO.

How so ?

BAPTISTA.

The Musa, as they say, refuses him.
The Master writes from Rome, to take him home.
He cannot be a painter.

OCTAVIO.

Now, that is well ;
He can serve me, keep my accounts,
My overseer be !

BAPTISTA.

Your Excellency ——

OCTAVIO.

Long have I wished to make the offer.

You are too far removed. I wish, near me,
A man, in whom to place my trust. 'T is not
Enough that only once in every week
You come to Parma.

BAPTISTA.

Ah, Excellency!
Your favor moves my father's heart almost
To tears.

OCTAVIO.

How didst thou hit upon the plan
To teach thy son the painter's idle art?

BAPTISTA.

Because it is the fashion now in Rome;
There artists are so honor'd, that one, they say,
Refused the holy cardinal's wish
To take his niece to wife.

OCTAVIO.

Antonio,
Perhaps, by his example, urged you on?

BAPTISTA.

Ah! that poor devil! He will never risk
The honor, to refuse a cardinal's niece;
He's pleased with less; his wife's a potter's child.

OCTAVIO.

Baptist, I envy him his lovely choice !
Compared to any higher dame, she's like
A rose beside a painted vase.

BAPTISTA.

Ah ! Ja——

OCTAVIO.

Know you the cause why I remain so long ?

BAPTISTA.

Your Excellency loves ——

OCTAVIO.

You know, then, ——

BAPTISTA.

The pleasant country round, that makes my inn
A summer villa, so to speak — to-day —
It makes me truly sorry, that to-day
Your Excellency can no longer stay.

OCTAVIO.

I am myself more sad. Have you the horse .
Prepared for riding ?

BAPTISTA.

It stands all ready.

OCTAVIO.

You'll come to-day?

BAPTISTA.

Your Excellency orders.

OCTAVIO.

Good! But to come back — about the painter.
Knowest thou indeed, my friend, the treasure
Beyond all price he owns? and why
He's envied thus?

BAPTISTA.

He has no treasure,
Not even a dollar.

OCTAVIO.

Yet, many dollars

Would I give to own his treasure, might
I call it mine. A Madonna has he
That with my fortune I willingly would buy.

BAPTISTA.

Ah, the new picture! That for a trifle
May be purchased. Your Excellency grant
That's no ideal. No Virgin Mary! [me, —
It is no less, and also nothing more
Than a fair sketch of his own wife!

OCTAVIO.

Ah! were it
The original, the fairest form on earth!

BAPTISTA.

Ah! a new light breaks in upon me! How!
The painter's wife has favor in your eyes?

OCTAVIO.

Hush! speak not so foolishly, Baptista!
In all relations between man and woman
The favor's given, if she is beautiful;
For beauty is to woman noble birth.

BAPTISTA.

Your lordship speaks like a true noble knight
Who honors his descent, and ancestors.
You would — the lady — should be — kind to you?

OCTAVIO.

Yet would I not offend the husband. [ple?
You know him — speak — belongs he to the peo-

BAPTISTA.

Ah, God! He is a simple, honest man,
That in this world lives only in a dream.
He has his wife for an ideal taken;
A lovely model, thus, to cost him nothing.
She is indeed a fair and chaste Madonna,

Although her husband does not worship her.
He lets her want all that a blooming,
A young wife desires. He cannot feed her.
Gentle she is, and patient in her wants.
You would, indeed, a Christian work perform,
To take the lovely creature to yourself.

[*Octavio looks round and sees that Antonio has returned, and is painting on the Madonna.*]

OCTAVIO.

He works again on that sweet portrait.
It must be mine, and he to Parma go.
I will invite both wife and child. The ceiling
Of the great hall he 'll paint in fresco.

[*He approaches Antonio and greets him.*]

BAPTISTA.

[*aside.*]

It goes on bravely. Revenge comes of itself.

OCTAVIO.

That lovely picture, Master Antonio,
Will it not soon be done?

ANTONIO.

Yes, my lord.

I hope to-day to give the final touch.

OCTAVIO.

Is it engaged?

ANTONIO.

No, my dear sir, I seek
For it a purchaser.

OCTAVIO.

A lovely thing like your Madonna there,
Will not have long to seek for many lovers.

ANTONIO.

Lovers, indeed 't will find, no doubt ; not thus
My object can be served. The lover
And the purchaser must meet together.
If loving only were the present need,
It would not stir from hence. Already one
I know, regarding it with passion,
With whom most willingly I'd leave the gem,
Could he but pay me.

OCTAVIO.

And who is that ?

ANTONIO.

Myself, my Lord !

OCTAVIO.

Ah, I believe you well ;
You're right to love this work, it does you honor.

ANTONIO.

Ah, sir, 'tis not the honor only, now ;
The artist perforce must love his work ;
It is not vanity ; he loves it like
The ideal, the image of his soul.

OCTAVIO.

Master Antonio the way will learn
To cheer himself for this. I have been told
The fair Madonna that I gaze upon,
Is not the creature of his soul. The fair
Original dwells there within — lives
In the real world. You have the lovely
Statue in your house. This is a copy only.

ANTONIO.

A copy can this picture not be called.

OCTAVIO.

Master Antonio, will you sell me this ?

ANTONIO.

[springs up.]

Most willingly, my honored Lord.

OCTAVIO.

In Parma,
In my palace, I have built a spacious hall ;
Built solely to receive good pictures.
No artist lives, and no great painter

Of whom I'd not possess a work. Yours must
Hang there.

ANTONIO.

My Lord, you do me too much honor.
But have you, indeed, of all the masters,
Pictures there ?

OCTAVIO.

Of all, indeed !

ANTONIO.

Except sometimes
In churches, a few old altar pieces,
No pictures of the masters have I seen.

OCTAVIO.

How have you then become so good a painter ?

ANTONIO.

God knows ! It has itself to me presented.

OCTAVIO.

Whenever this your picture's ready,
Then come to me at Parma. There, open
Are my treasures for your inspection.
For this, I'll pay you then your eighty scudi.

ANTONIO. [surprised.

That is too much! Dear sir, it is not earned.

OCTAVIO.

A nobleman must nobly pay, not
Bargain with the honest artist. He must
Reward, support him. In Parma also
My picture you shall paint.

Master Antonio!

Pray do me now the favor to summon here
Your young and lovely wife, one moment;
I wish to see, whether the picture's like her.

ANTONIO.

She is a little timid, sir, with strangers;
Too much, before so great a gentleman.

OCTAVIO.

That pleases me. I pray you call her.

ANTONIO.

Permit me, sir, to say, that artist-like
Is not the likeness, in the sense you mean.
I understand not portrait painting. [he calls.
Marie! wife! You'll find 't is not Marie!

[Marie comes in.]

What wouldst thou, dearest husband?

[She perceives Octavio and greets him silently.]

ANTONIO.

[*aside to her.*

My Lord

Would buy my picture for eighty scudi !
He is a noble, generous, brave man,
Who values art, and would protect the artist.
Now, he would see if my Marie, here,
Is like the fair Madonna in the picture.

OCTAVIO.

You are Marie, lovely signora ?

MARIE.

My Lord ! your servant.

[*Octavio looks carefully at the picture and at Marie with emotion.*]

OCTAVIO.

The likeness is most striking ; no less
The difference. Master Antonio, much
Art have you displayed, much talent also.
The blooming beauty of your lovely wife,
The simple inborn grace you've joined with
Inspirations holy and devout, and grace
That charmingly becomes her ; I know
But one more winning charm, becomes her better,
That nature has herself bestowed upon her,
The charm of naive and simple innocence.
Who sees your picture only, will exclaim

“Nature can furnish nothing lovelier.”
 But when he sees your wife, enchanted,
 He will say, “No painter, God, himself,
 Has formed that gracious creature!” Nature
 And art alike enchanting me, I turn —
 From the celestial, turn to simpler beauty —
 The one admire — adore the other.

ANTONIO.

Sir!

You're very gracious!

OCTAVIO.

Indeed I can
 No longer wait, though willingly I bind
 Myself to art, to beauty and to nature.
 Delay not long — the picture ready,
 To Parma hasten; there will we form
 Our friendship's bond. My palace will admit
 Both wife and child.

In Parma lovely frescoes have you
 Painted in *San Guiseppe*, *San Giovanni* —
 Such would I have the ceiling of my hall.
 Farewell, my friend! Lovely Marie, farewell!
 Our own misfortune it will surely be
 If all are not most happy. [goes.

BAPTISTA.

[*enters.*]

Have I a bad acquaintance brought you ?

ANTONIO.

Come on ! Give me your hand, forgive the past.
You are indeed a hero !

BAPTISTA. [*laughing maliciously.*]

A brave one !

Now will I go prepare your famous dinner.

ANTONIO.

[*gay and happy.*]

By heaven ! 't is true ; as soon as poverty
Begins to press, help is the nearest then.
Marie ! dearest ! art thou not happy ?

[*he embraces her.*]

Ah ! it is true what I so oft have said ;
Good men still dwell within this wicked world.
One need but work and do one's duty well,
The patron comes, and help and friends appear !
Thou art so serious ! O rejoice with me !
To-day I cannot touch the pencil. No !
My heart and hand tremble alike with joy !

[*Giovanni enters.*]

Ah, dearest treasure, boy of my heart !
Come to thy father, and we will play till
Comes our famous dinner.

[*Antonio takes the boy gaily in his arms and
goes out with him into the grove.*]

MARIE.

[*alone.*

Rejoice ! O God ! to me there 's nothing good !
The count — he has — how often — prest my hand !
His glances — O my God — Antonio !
Canst thou rejoice ? Thy soul so perfect and
So pure, has no suspicion of dishonor ;
Dreams not of insult to our poverty !
But ah ! thy hopes ! thy joys ! “ He must be glad,
Shielded from all emotion of the mind,
He must rejoice in nature.” Ah, old man !
Wert thou thus sent from the dark grove to warn,
A herald from pale death, to tell me of
The coming ill !

The sky 's no longer blue,
The thunder comes, and the dark clouds roll up—
They sweep across our humble home. On us
A burning siroc blows. Our modest joys
Must wither in the blast. The lightning
Strikes with wilder ruin ! and we ! who 'll save ?

The curtain falls.

ACT II.

Before the Inn. Michael Angelo. Julio Romano.

JULIO.

Come! let us sit; this place is cool and airy,
With trees o'ershadowed; and there stands the inn,
As we were told, respectable without.
Sure we are better here than at Reggío.

[*Michael shows great impatience.*]

Ah, Master Michael, you are growing warm!
No wonder, for the midday sun is hot.
Under this tree you will again be cool.
They say the host has excellent good wine!
And, scold me not too much, a wheel may break;
That may be seen beforehand. The great wheel
Of time may roll as heavily along
As it were broken.

MICHAEL.

Ah! your wheel of time!

JULIO.

Then it flies often like the ice-borne sled,
That one can scarce believe it is a wheel.

MICHAEL.

Pray, leave your wit.

JULIO.

When you have left your anger.

MICHAEL.

You may wait long for that.

JULIO.

I have some jokes
In store. Come you and sit beneath this tree.
Its oaken boughs shall be for you the laurel,
And your unsheltered head protect. Take it
In love; the leaf is beautiful; related
To the laurel.

MICHAEL.

[*sits.*

You are indeed polite.

JULIO.

The Duke will wait to-day in vain for dinner.
We're expected in Modena.

MICHAEL.

So it appears.

JULIO.

The noble host and all his guests from Mantua
Will wait for us in vain.

MICHAEL.

Let them so wait ;
Accustom them to wait in patience thus ;
It may be useful to them.

[*The waiter enters.*]

What wish

Your honors ?

JULIO.

Bring wine, my son ! What wine have you ?

WAITER.

All sorts, your Excellency !

MICHAEL.

Drawn from *one* cask ?

JULIO.

Bring us the best.

MICHAEL.

Not so — you always make
The people think we are splendid princes,
Travelling incog to please ourselves.
Upon the road consuming, and then paying
Most princely, that thus we may be known.
Say, boy ! have you good Florentina ?

WAITER.

Yes, my Lord, indeed!

MICHAEL.

Bring us a measure.

[*goes.*

JULIO.

Would you not rather taste the sweet?

MICHAEL.

God shield
Me from it. Would you sweet wine? I'll call
The youth again.

JULIO.

No; I'll drink with you.

MICHAEL.

You will do well. The sweet should rarely be,
Or never drunk. Here 't would be good for
nothing.

Sweet wine should be full sound. Remember you,
Raffael, our great master, died therefrom.

[*The waiter enters with wine.*]

There is the wine.

JULIO.

Ah, that is good. How cool
Is a cool glass, in such a sultry day!

MICHAEL. [*tastes the wine.*

The wine is good for nothing! it is with copper
Poison'd. What! waiter, would you poison us!
Immediately, some other wine — far better —
Else, I'll throw the goblet at your head.

WAITER.

We have some better — but it is dearer.

MICHAEL.

For five bajocas, I can drink the best.
Bring it instanter!

WAITER.

[*aside.*Their honors understand. [*goes.*

JULIO.

[*smiles and looks half-wondering at Michael.*]
In little as in great, always the same.
There comes the goblet. It may now be good.

MICHAEL.

[*tastes.*

That wine is good.

WAITER.

My Lords will order something ?

MICHAEL.

When it is time.

[waiter goes.]

JULIO.

Shall we a dinner order ? Till the time,
There in the church we'll look at the old pictures
Of the old masters. There may be pictures
Of Cimabue. E'en something there may hang
Of Giotto.

MICHAEL.

Were it from holy Luke,

His splendid heads there, with the golden ground,
I would not go. For this hot day — enough !

Shall I go searching in the old damp church
Where art itself in darkness has conceal'd ?

They may hang there, and for a time may pass
As miracles. What can I there discover ?

What can I learn ? *Heads* I can make myself.

Of form, the beauty is not there. Go you !

From Raffael you have received the gift

Of admiration for the old Cath'lic forms.

But take good care that when you paint again

You draw the heroic not in limb too small.

The holy virgin may so pass. The strength
Of heroes' limbs demands a solid kneading.

JULIO.

There the sculptor spake, not the wise painter.
The *stone* discloses limbs; *color* the soul!
To seize, dear master, and express the soul
That speaks in lovely natures, we must in art
Look for its simple, early, childlike form.

MICHAEL.

Discover as you will. I remain here.
Rather would I in the cool air remain;
Fann'd in the shadow of a graceful tree,
Than creep in sad salpetre vaults and choirs,
In search of the old saints' and martyrs' heads.

JULIO.

Go with me now! thus you have often spoken;
But when you've been persuaded to observe
The work of an old artist, its simple,
Quiet power has given you joy.
Yours is an artist's heart. Upon your lips
Alone, the spirit of sarcasm dwells.

MICHAEL.

You're very gracious to console me thus!
But go; your time and hopes are lost on me.

I've not the soul, the sentiment you find
In your great, glorious, antient masters.
I am no Raffael; that, I know too well!

JULIO.

The powers of excellence are divers.
Arch-angels are you both in painting.
Michael and Raffael, which is the first?
He is a cherub with his silver wings
And blooming infant head. A seraph you,
Soaring aloft, with six powerful wings.

MICHAEL.

The copper in the wine makes you poetical.
Go now Sir Urian — What would I say —
Sir Uriel. You are the third with us?
Is it not true? go now, sir flatterer!
Fair women you may flatter, but not me.

JULIO.

Come, go with me?

MICHAEL.

No.

JULIO.

Then stay; but order us
A famous dinner.

MICHAEL.

I'm very sorry
You cannot with the Duke repast.
I am a Florentine, a citizen,
Accustomed to mechanics' fare, and if
You dine with me, you must be moderate.

JULIO.

Do as you will.

MICHAEL.

Greet well your saints for me.

JULIO.

I will inform them of your pious fast.
That will rejoice them — they love repentance.
[*goes.*]

MICHAEL.

The simpleton ! But he has charmed me,
And banish'd evil humor with his prating.
An honest fellow, Julio Romano !
Could he but cure himself of gallantry !
[*Baptista enters.*]

MICHAEL.

Who then comes here to plague me with his talk ?

BAPTISTA.

With great alarm I've heard my reverend sir,
Your Excellence has met with a mishap. [had
Thank God it was no worse. You might have
A wound; broken an arm; fractured your head;
Or, far worse, a leg; to speak the honest truth,
A broken arm your Excellence could bear.
Without a leg — how could you, in the world
Get on? 'T was well it happened here.
One should not praise himself; but I may boast
My house is famed for excellence.

MICHAEL.

That have we in the wine experienced!

BAPTISTA.

The careless boy has been severely scolded
For serving, to such exalted Lords, bad wine.
'There is a difference. We are indeed
All men — but, dear God! there are degrees.

MICHAEL.

No man can live with copper in his body.

BAPTISTA.

It is not copper, Excellency!
Only a little wormwood; a little herb
To make the new wine healthful for the stomach.

MICHAEL.

I am no Lord, nor Excellency ! Neither
Is requisite to drink good wine !

BAPTISTA.

Am I allowed to ask your honor's name ?

MICHAEL.

They call me Master Michael from Florence.

BAPTISTA.

[aside.

How ? Michael from Florence ? a carriage ?
Servants, horses ? Bah ! then I will wager
He's a great lord ; so proud ! so tranquil !
They must their idle humors ever follow !

[aloud.

Now, Master Michael from Florence,
What shall I serve you, for your noon repast ?

[he laughs.

MICHAEL.

Laugh you at me ?

BAPTISTA.

Ah, God forbid ! I laughed
At your strange name.

MICHAEL.

What have you, sir, against
The name ? A duke, were it his, might bear it.

BAPTISTA.

O nothing. Names, are but names, a sound,
That passes through the air. I am for instance
Call'd Baptista ; that does not signify
That I 'm baptiz'd ; for *that*, I am, of course.

MICHAEL.

And what, think you, does my name signify ?

BAPTISTA.

Upon what follows —

MICHAEL.

Do you then know me ?

BAPTISTA.

In your great attributes, most noble sir !

MICHAEL.

You have then works of mine already seen ?
Attributes, as you are pleas'd to call them.

BAPTISTA.

Your attributes, and things now, are both one.

MICHAEL. [*with impatience.*

Know you, that I am the Buonarotti ?

BAPTISTA.

Is 't possible ? Michael — Michael Buonarotti !
Yes, yes, God knows they go together ; yes,
Add now the Angelo, and the great name 's
Complete. We have the whole great man, thank
God !

O, rare good fortune, safe, in my humble house.
The greatest artist 'neath its little roof.

MICHAEL.

That 's very possible, dear friend ! I sit
Without.

BAPTISTA.

How must I live to day ! what joy !
My noble sir remain ! eat, drink, and sleep
Long as you will, in my poor house. I 'll take
No penny, nothing from you !

MICHAEL.

How so ?

BAPTISTA.

Believe you then, the host that Raphael ¹ sheltered,

¹ Baptista pronounces Raffael, short.

(Raphel to pay him, left a lovely fresco,
 Painted upon the dining hall.) Think you
 He is the only host within our ranks,
 That bears in his base heart, no love for art ?
 No, truly not ! as you, from all report,
 Excel our Raphel, three times over,
 My love and reverence three times greater are.

MICHAEL.

My gratitude must then be three times more.
 Three pictures must I paint you.

BAPTISTA.

God forbid !

From you, the smallest little piece of marble ;
 From Michael, with the master's chisel touched,
 Will serve as talisman ; what need I else,
 To draw the world into my humble house ?

MICHAEL.

It is a pity, now, I have not time,
 Else would I paint an allegoric picture
 Of selfishness, as large as life. I have
 The model, already *here*, before me !

[*He sees Antonio, who has returned, and paints in his open apartment.*]

Do I see right ? Ah, yes ! There sits a painter,

Lost in his work ! It is so ! Yes, truly !
Man ! why importune a stranger ? artists,
Accomplished artists, are in the village.
Who is the man that sits, and paints unknown ?

BAPTISTA.

'That is my best, my truest, and best friend.

MICHAEL.

An excellent accredance ! Is he as great
In art as he is noble in his friendship,
Then will he reach the unattained ideal !

BAPTISTA.

'T will do ! My Lord ! he must be known ;
a great
Original is he ; not from great artists,
Nor great instruction, is he formed ; O no !
All comes from nature ; and his mind creates
The glorious picture ! So must genius live !
The artistical, he says, spoils all true art !
There as he sits, I swear you would not see him ;
Yet he, himself believes, greater than Raphael.

MICHAEL.

That is too good !

BAPTISTA.

In all respects he's good,
An amiable man. But of artists,
From out the city, of whom we so much hear,
He little thinks — "with such a cry," he says,
"They've little wool."
A genius also is his little son;
There on the wall, his infant sketches stand.
The father only somewhat helped the boy.
You would have seen his pleasure, that the child
Displayed so rare a talent. Shall I
Inform him of your presence?

MICHAEL.

As brother artist?

BAPTISTA.

I would prefer a name unknown, to give.

MICHAEL.

Indeed! go you
And chatter with him while I in peace
Empty my glass.

BAPTISTA.

[goes into Antonio's room.]

Now, friend Antonio,
Have you been pleased to-day with dining?

ANTONIO.

Dear sir, I am ashamed ; you have yourself
So kind and friendly proved ! Forgive me !
One is not always master of his humor,
As you know well !

BAPTISTA.

Ah, blessed God ! I have
Been more to blame than you. In truth — but then
The heart is good. *[offers him his hand.*

ANTONIO. *[presses it.*

Indeed, indeed !

BAPTISTA.

We are
Old neighbors and good friends ; or, are we not,
We can be.

ANTONIO.

Dear sir !

BAPTISTA.

How comes the picture on ?

ANTONIO.

It's nearly ready, and will soon be dry.
I paint so slowly — the colors may not sink.

It is vexatious, that even to-day
To Parma I must go. Better it were ——

BAPTISTA.

No, no! go you not forth to-day; well packed,
What can it suffer if I bear it there?
We must the fancies of the great indulge,
Octavio to-day would have the picture;
And you must strike meanwhile the iron's hot.

ANTONIO.

That I will do. The work is not more needful
To him, than money is to me.

BAPTISTA.

Ah, well!

Go you to-day; you can at night return.

ANTONIO.

I must then run; the way is far too long.

BAPTISTA.

The road is good, and it is summer time.

ANTONIO.

The wood is dark, and there are robbers there.
Beside, I must in Parma colors purchase.

BAPTISTA.

Spare you your money. You will give for colors
All you receive.

ANTONIO.

I must purple have,
Ultra-marine. How can I without color
Paint?

BAPTISTA.

Do as the others.

ANTONIO.

They no painters are
That love not color. He is no painter
That loves not lovely, varied splendor.

BAPTISTA.

To speak of something else. See you the man
That at the table sits, and drinks?

ANTONIO.

Yes, yes.
He looks athletic, and most strongly built.
Who is the gentleman?

BAPTISTA.

A travelling
Mechanic. A worker in colors, I believe,

Who has some gold collected. He's rough,
Speaks ill of all, and is with nothing pleased.
The wine, that you so long were glad to drink,
Pleased not the Florentine. He must have better.

ANTONIO.

The rich to dainties are accustomed.

BAPTISTA.

Me
He has offended, past all cure — has cast
Upon me the whole time, reproach ! I will
Myself have prompt revenge.

ANTONIO.

Let that remain.

BAPTISTA.

No ! my revenge severe shall be — not cruel —
The best on blockheads is, forever, wit.

ANTONIO.

In that you're right.

BAPTISTA.

But I have little wit.
While you — you're blessed with wit.

ANTONIO.

Ah, dear Heaven !
Humor, sometimes, can make me very cheerful ;
Wit, I have none, and love not satire.

BAPTISTA.

Look ! he comes near, to observe your picture ;
If you indeed, are truly bound to me,
Do me the special favor, Master Antonio !
You can — it better do than I can tell —
You will perceive — he will himself give out
The tone ——

ANTONIO.

I know — as in the wood, for instance.
One calls aloud — the other shouts the answer.
[*Michael enters.*]

MICHAEL.

Dare one observe the gentleman's design ?

ANTONIO.

Look, my dear sir ; indeed I play but solo ;
Yet, will you not betray my ignorance.

MICHAEL.

You do not fear ?

ANTONIO.

The gentleman can nearer come.

MICHAEL.

[looks surprised upon the picture.

Ah, what a play of colors !

ANTONIO.

Is it not true ?

The Lady 's gay enough. She 's from my heart.

MICHAEL.

Dear sir, your coloring is very good.

ANTONIO.

Is 't true ? I willingly would color well.

MICHAEL.

What would you say ? Do you not hear ?
I tell you seriously — your coloring is *good*.

ANTONIO.

Alas, dear sir, my color 's very pale !

MICHAEL.

You 've talent !

ANTONIO.

Is 't possible !

MICHAEL.

[excited, but restraining himself.
Yes, talent !

ANTONIO.

I will believe it, as you've said it twice.

MICHAEL.

Design you cannot ; and, as distorted
In your art, as in your life.

ANTONIO.

How mean you ?

MICHAEL.

Who, for example, has instructed you
The delicate finger, crooked thus to turn ?

ANTONIO.

*[Observes Michael with attention, and then the
picture.]*

You mean ——

MICHAEL.

And what a sweet, a honey-sweet, fond smile !

The picture is *too* lovely ! 'T is a pity
In the fore-shortening — you are far too short.

ANTONIO.

How mean you, sir ?

MICHAEL.

Does then the gentleman
Seriously believe, that he can draw
An arm, a leg ?

ANTONIO.

[*surprised.*

Who then are you, sir ?

MICHAEL.

[*takes a pencil.*

Look here, sir ; what say you to this ? If this
Right arm were so much longer drawn. If this
Left leg so rested on the foot, instead
As now, hanging, a little, lovely, heavy thing ?

ANTONIO.

You think ? My God, you're right ! who are
you then ?

MICHAEL.

[*proudly.*

No matter. One, perhaps, who understands,

To whom more reverence should be shown,
If *he*¹ were not much more than even, *a bungler*.

ANTONIO.

Who are you ? God in Heaven ! who ?

MICHAEL. *[is going.*

Your servant !

ANTONIO.

[Seizes his hand and looks at the seal ring.]

You are ? my God ! “ *The Vintage of the Dryads ;* ”

I know this ring from its description. You —
You're Buonarotti.

MICHAEL. *[going.*

That is possible.

ANTONIO.

O stay ! stay yet a moment ! pardon me ;
Forgive me, if unhappily, through sport,
Through levity or pride — through ignorance —
[seizes his picture.
Observe this picture — but one moment only !

¹ Michael Angelo uses the third personal pronoun as a mark of contempt.

O tell me — no, you will not say again !
Alas ! great master ! am I a bungler ?
Were you in earnest ?

MICHAEL.

[violently and with contempt.

Go ! you are a weak,
A miserable man — full of presumption
And peasants' pride ! then, servilely subdued,
With childish tears ! Go ! strive not to enter thou
The sacred precincts of our holy art.
Admit, that color glows before your sense ;
Despondency, both childish and abject,
Will never reach the summit of true art.

*[Michael goes out and Baptista follows him.
Antonio remains stunned, looking at his picture.]*

ANTONIO.

Is it a dream ? or has indeed the great,
The gifted artist been with me. Did *he*
Say that ? or were it but delusion ?

*[He sits down and covers his face with both hands,
then rises.]*

I still am giddy — but I am awake !
A fearful sound dispelled my sleep ! I am
“ *A bungler.* ” That would I not believe, if
Buonarotti had not himself declared it.

[*He seems lost in thought.*]

There hovered lovely mists before my eyes ;
I thought them really forms of beauty,
And seized the pencil to arrest their flight.
Then on the canvass they were mist again,
A variegated playwork, without form,
Or grace, or noble sense, or just proportion.

[*With deep melancholy.*]

Alas ! I did not think ; with a pure heart
And inmost feeling I approached my work.
My canvass was to me a holy shrine ;
As in the presence of the Eternal
I humbly knelt, and sought, with sacred
Awe, to penetrate the invisible !

[*He pauses in deep thought.*]

Ah, I have erred ! too much ! too much !
When as a boy in Florence with my father
(For he had business in the market-place)
I ran one evening to the church alone —
The church of the Lorenzo. There I stood
Before the tombs of Julio and Lorenzo.
Beheld those sacred forms of day and night,
The Twilight and Aurora, of white marble,
The work of Michael Angelo ! I went out
Immediately, and forth ! Deep in my heart
Engraved the memory of that hour,

The only one when I had seen of art
The highest effort. They were so strange and
cold,
So great and beautiful, and yet so dead
And mournful — How glad was I to see again
Without, the lovely flowers and azure sky !
Once more I stand in that dark vault ; vanished
Are all the outward, cheerful forms. Shuddering
I stand, annihilated, in presence of
The twilight and the night ! I'll paint no more !

[*With deep emotion.*]

God knows it was not done in idle pride ;
As the bee builds its cell, I was impelled ;
And like the instinct of the bird to form
Its nest, I painted.

Was it an idle whim ?
He shall repeat it. He shall say 't again !
Passionately not, in scorn ; but calmly,
With quiet dignity and power, such as
His day upon Lorenzo's tomb, he shall repeat
That word ! and then, farewell ! thou lovely art !
I am again what once I was, a quiet
Simple man. I shall not mourn, nor sink again
Into despair ! Conscience is yet within me,
Calm and pure. Am I no artist ? I am
Not mean, nor abject. Only the earth-famed

Angelo, that tells me so. An inward
Voice, that comes from God, whispers, "thou art
not!"

MARIE.

[*enters.*

How's this! Antonio? art sad? not painting?
That is a wonder! alone! and working not.

ANTONIO.

Marie, dearest wife! the painting's finished!

MARIE.

Is it *quite* finished?

ANTONIO.

[*painfully, and pressing her hand.*

Yes! dearest — finished!

MARIE.

What is the matter? good God! you weep!

ANTONIO.

Nay, not so, Marie.

MARIE.

What has come o'er thee?

Conceal it not.

ANTONIO.

Be calm, dear wife ! I have
Considered all things in our life — the whole ;
And I have found the means by which we live
Make us not happy ; and I have resolved —
The resolution is my own — to change.

MARIE.

I understand thee not.

ANTONIO.

When as a bride,
'T is now seven years, I asked thee of thy
Father ; Canst thou remember what he said ?
The old man said, " Antonio, leave off
This painting ! he, who is always dreaming,
Who lives in art, is good for nothing
In this world of ours. The artist cannot
Make any woman happy. More than his wife
The Muse enchants him. In presence of
The children of his soul, both son and daughter
He remembers not."

MARIE.

My father's heart was good ;
He was an honest man ; a useful plant
That quietly expanded in the ground ;
Nature denied him flowers. No more of that !

ANTONIO.

“Be,” said he then, “a potter like myself;
Paint little pictures on the clay to sell;
Thus wilt thou live care free, with wife and child,
And consecrate to them thy time and life.”

MARIE.

He saw not *that* I ever loved in thee !
Thy genius, and thy noble, loving soul ;
Thine art it was that made my happiness ;
It was a part of all my love for thee !

ANTONIO.

My child, believe it not ; thou art not blest !
Thy hopes have all been blighted.

MARIE.

Antonio !

Would you so deeply wound and grieve me thus ?

ANTONIO.

Thou art an angel, and content withal.
But no, I have not made thee happy ;
I have not all my soul to thee devoted.
On dreamy forms it has been too much wasted.
My gains I've sometimes spent in costly colors ;
Sometimes I have declined thy counsels.
Oft have we suffered need ; thy gentle heart
Has oft been tried.

It shall no more be thus ;
For the impossible we will not strive,
Nor waste our life in feverish dreams.
I will go back to the obscure of life ;
Henceforth I may not be an artist, but
The duties of a father I may learn.

MARIE.

Thou not an artist ? then upon this earth
Art will no longer bloom !

ANTONIO.

Dear wife ! thou lovest me ?

MARIE.

Yes, because I know thee well.

ANTONIO.

[Takes her hand and leads her before his picture.]

Thou smil'st with innocence and love ; mark thou
How honey-sweet the picture grins ?

MARIE.

[perplexed.

Antonio !

ANTONIO.

Now I behold the fault. Why had I not
A friend that could have told me, for I feel
The power within me to paint the true !

MARIE.

My God ! What 's happened ?

ANTONIO.

[observing his picture with melancholy.]

Ah, still to me

There 's something in the picture. Something,
Not wholly to despise. Not color merely ;
Not readiness of pencil ; not the play
Of light and shadow, that dazzles only ;
But something solemn and sublime !

MARIE.

What has come

O'er thee, Antonio ? say !

ANTONIO.

[after a pause with dignity.]

Twice has he said it !

Thundered it twice ! The sentence must be
A *third* time spoken — then I'm a potter.

MARIE.

Who has been here ?

ANTONIO.

Angelo ! Buonarotti !

MARIE.

And he? He has said —

ANTONIO.

Be quiet, dearest child!
For the third sentence we will silent wait.
Till then I will not tear myself away
From my beloved art. Once more! once more!
Then will I paint on clay.

ACT III.

Antonio alone with the picture.

The varnish now is all that's wanting. Ha!
The veil will be too thin, frail and transparent:
Ah, could I only keep it from the world!
Why does hard fate compel us thus to part?
Is it deception? Is so great a price
Proposed for a bad, bungling work?
The gentleman himself has looked upon it,
Has offered me the sum. Is it too much?
I said it at the time — it was too much.

[*He takes the pencil.*

Here in the grass I'll paint a hyacinth.
When lovely maidens die they strew sweet flowers
Upon the grave! My hope was beautiful!
But it is dead! Well, I will plant a flower,

The last ; and then, when I no longer paint,
How shall I live ? My painting has become
Breath of my life, of my existence, part !
Farewell ! The whole long week I'll work ;
I'll work for wife and child — mechanic's work !
The sabbath morning shall belong to me !
The blooming iris, with her lovely bow,
Her airy seven-colored bow, shall visit
My morning dreams. Then for my own delight,
I'll sketch ; compose and paint for my own joy.
It yet will be an innocent enjoyment.
The pictures shall adorn our cottage wall.
Our humble life shall still be beautiful ;
Marie loves them — so does the boy.
When I am dead, and hither comes the pilgrim
Wandering, he'll see the pictures on the wall ;
Perhaps he'll weep ; not so severe are all
As Buonarotti. Perhaps the wanderer
Will say, " This artist a true reverence
Had for art, and cherished all that's beautiful."

[Julio Romano has in the mean time entered, but remains at a distance observing Antonio, without being seen by him.]

JULIO.

There sits the God created ! Already there
He paints another picture, to astound
The world. O, how I long to know that man !

Patience ! I will observe his noble brow,
And thus prolong my joy. Am I awake ?
What have I seen ? I must from Rome to this
Poor village come, to find again my Raffael !
O wonderful ! we build in cities, in the
World, our schools for our great pupils ; princes
Foster our efforts and reward their growth ;
Instructed from our tender youth to use
The means, good patterns placed before us ;
No splendid opportunity is lost
To use the art we 've learnt ; and what ? what
Are we all but scholars ? good imitators !
Amidst the noblest, rarest works of art !
Should genius show itself again on earth,
'T will not be from the forcing house of art.
The miracles of mind were never formed
With artificial heat. In the wild wood
They grow, chance-sowed by destiny,
Ripened by accident, and e'er we look about us
(Observing our models, we are turned to stone
And think *that* is the end of art,) behold
There stands the genius in our midst ;
And we — we look, and are again amazed !
O strange ! that ever, as in Nazareth,
The godlike must be lowly born ; angels
That bless the world must in the manger rest.

[*He approaches Antonio and observes his work.*]

ANTONIO.

Stand there, thou little lowly hyacinth ;
Thy violet paleness betokens death.

JULIO.

[retreats again, and looks at Antonio.]

He is as pleasing as his picture looks ;
Gentle and friendly — and full of feeling.
His art owns not the melancholy ray
That his wan features show. The splendid color,
So richly there diffused, warms not his cheek.

ANTONIO.

There is another travelling stranger here !

JULIO.

My dearest sir, pardon if I, perhaps,
Disturb your work. The effort to remove
Before I've learnt the artist's name whose works
Adorn this place, is vain.

ANTONIO.

Ah, my God !
You'll only know a poor and troubled man.

JULIO.

How's this ? The splendid sun that kindles thus,
Imparts it life and heat to us alone ?

ANTONIO.

My dearest sir, you speak so kindly ! mock
 You would not, and yet your praises wound me ;
 A sun ! knew you how dark it is within !
 The faintest star looks not upon my night.

[*He lays his hand upon his breast.*

JULIO. [*with animation.*

Nay ; from thy night beams forth resistless day !
 Precursor of immortal glory ! Signor, I —
 I pray, thy name.

ANTONIO.

Antonio Allegri.

JULIO.

ANTONIO ALLEGRI DA CORREGGIO !

How can that name sound strangely to my ears
 That soon the universal tongue shall speak ?
 I have, indeed, beheld thy night, Antonio,
 There, in the church. What thou wouldst represent

Thou hast thyself performed — a miracle ! Light
 Breaks through the night of Jewish ignorance !
 The shepherds on the plain rejoice. I am
 Myself among them, and stand in awe,
 Powerless to explain the wonder I behold ;
 Veiling my dazzled eyes, and half in doubt
 That all I see may prove delusion !

ANTONIO.

Too much ! dear sir ! it is delusion all !
You are an honest man — you love the art.
Permit me but to say, you know too well,
Ah, better than myself, 't is all delusion !

JULIO.

Signor Antonio, you perplex me much.

ANTONIO.

Signor ! I do not understand myself.

JULIO.

Thou art in all things enigmatical.
How did in solitude thy art expand ?
How has the world and thy own worth remained
To thee unknown ?

ANTONIO.

How find you now this picture, for example ?

JULIO.

How can a *word* express my admiration ?
If I say beautiful, what have I said ?
The Raffael Madonna was alone !
Of the Divinity, the only mother !
And only thus could I the heavenly know.
Here it is changed, and yet again the same ;

Another, and the same, smiles out upon me,
With more of woman's tenderness and love
Maternal, than of queenly dignity ;
Less of the woman than the spotless saint !
Raffael the earthly has exalted !
But you have drawn the heav'nly down to earth,
And with the earthly formed a blessed bond.

ANTONIO.

[*Looks at him with astonishment, and then at his picture, and asks doubtingly,*]

And see you, then, no failure in the work ?

JULIO.

What is a failure, where so much is done ?
In such a flood of beauty who 'd complain
Of want, if *all* were not perfection ?

ANTONIO.

But what ? what, then, is wanting ?

JULIO.

All is here

That makes this picture a rare masterpiece.
It lives and breathes, instinct with life divine ;
With inward feeling and deep thought conceived,
Wrought out with industry and living power.
What would I more ?

ANTONIO.

Sufficient is the praise ;
But tell me now the faults.

JULIO.

Genius has never failed
Where art itself has erred ; where fleeting
thoughts
Become confused, there have you by some
Strength of soul, power of emotion, bestowed
A charm, even on the fault itself, that
I might say belongs to you alone,
If Raffael in that were not like you.

ANTONIO.

Dear sir, inform me where my art has erred,
You cannot know how happy you will make me,
To show me all my faults.

JULIO. *[with diffidence.*

The anatomist
Might say, there were defects of drawing —

ANTONIO.

Now ! for example ?

JULIO.

The fore-shortening
Of this arm may not be right. The child's limbs

May be too round, childishly tender ;
May fail in contour — You love the graceful,
Rounded form, and would avoid the harshness
Of reality.

ANTONIO.

Once more, dear signor !

Then shall I breathe again. How do you find
The smile upon the lips of the Madonna ;
Of the child ?

JULIO.

Peculiar ; but most lovely.

ANTONIO.

Not then “unmeaning” — “grimmacing” and
“Honey-sweet.”

JULIO.

Thus have I ever dreamed
An angel smiles !

ANTONIO.

Thus have I also dreamed !

JULIO.

And do you mourn that you have caught their
meaning ?

ANTONIO.

Nay, I am sad that I so much have erred.

JULIO.

Again, dear sir, your words become a riddle.

ANTONIO.

Sir, you have spoken the feelings of my heart.
I am consoled, that there are men beside
Myself, learned and wise, who err as I have.
Yet what amazes me, is the true sentence
Which on my faults has been pronounced by you.
In that you have not erred; but gently, and
With love, have made me feel them. So rich
Your judgment — discourse so full of knowledge,
Would inexpressibly delight my heart,
Did I not know — alas! too well I know —
That all my efforts worthless are, and vain.

JULIO.

[surprised.]

Who has told you this?

ANTONIO.

The greatest artist
Of our time, the Michael Angelo!

JULIO.

I could have sworn it! 'T is so like himself!
The broken wheel is whirling in his head.

ANTONIO.

Nay, at first unconsciously, from levity,
I wounded him. The man who dwells therein,
A vulgar man, who seemed to know him,
Came and informed me, that the traveller
Who there sat, was a dauber, in colors,
Who talked of things of which he nothing knew,
A rude companion, who had injured him !
Then I received him, not, indeed, with love,
Which he so well deserves. He spoke to me
Morosely and unkindly. I answered him
With levity and sport — so he was vexed ;
Called me a “ bungler,” “ mean and base ;” misled
By a vain love of splendid coloring,
I ne’er should reach the height of art, nor feel
The power of greatness and true beauty !

JULIO.

[with violence.

Therein he ’s right. Those heights you will not
reach,
Because ’t is done already. Already you
Surpass the Sixtine Chapel.

ANTONIO.

[makes a deprecating motion with his hand.

Ah ! dear sir —

JULIO.

You deem I judge of colors like the blind.
Therein you err. I am, indeed, no peerless
Master. No Angelo! no Michael!
But yet I am a man, a Roman too.
Not Cæsar — but a Julius. I have been taught
What painting is. Raffael, the great, the godlike,
Was my master. His deathless spirit hovers
O'er, and speaks the word, that I repeat again.

ANTONIO.

O Heaven! you then are Julio Romano!
The splendid artist. The holy Raffael's
Favorite pupil! and you repeat, I am
No bungler!

JULIO.

I was his favorite pupil;
And I repeat, that since his death, there lives
In Italy, than *thou*, no greater artist,
Antonio Allegri da Correggio!

ANTONIO.

[sits.]

Permit me, sir! — my head is dizzy.
Such bliss! — I've never lived till now.
Indeed, I understand not how I live.
My life has flowed in shadow like an
Undiscovered spring, hidden beneath the rock.

A vain pretender I am not. I thought
 To live unknown, a simple artist ; trusting
 The muse alone, and then good fortune,
 I sat alone, and painted. *Now* I may hope
 One day to live. Two famous masters my
 Solitude have seen ; one treads me in the dust,
 The other lifts my heart to heaven. Which
 Shall I trust ? awake ? or still dream on ?

JULIO.

The *one*, should he repeat, what I have said ?

ANTONIO.

Mean you if Michael Angelo should say it ?

JULIO.

To act, like no one else, is his. His force
 Is of the ancient world. His genius is
 Less godlike than of the Titan race ; grace
 Is ever wanting there. The infant love
 Rests not above his works, hov'ring delighted ;
 Eros, the ancient fire inspires his soul ;
 Not as a winged child, but like a vigorous youth
 Feels he his power.

Be calm ! I understand
 His soul, and will speak to it. The Titan
 Has a human heart. His offspring powerful is,
 Like those of Kronos, but destructive rage

Is not in him. Prometheus-like, he robs
The fire from heaven, that he may bless
The earth with light. Let but the storm outblow,
And, my Antonio, he will praise your work.
Retire within your house. I see him coming.

[Antonio goes into his house.]

MICHAEL.

[enters.]

We can now travel.

JULIO.

Alas, not yet, my friend.
A nobler wheel has now been broken,
That, e'er we journey on, must be repaired.

MICHAEL.

What does that mean ?

JULIO.

It means — Remember you
The water-wheel, without, upon the flood,
Built by your splendid art ? I recollect
You have yourself the model much improved.

MICHAEL.

'T was a good work.

JULIO.

Listen, and be displeased.

An idle gentleman feels ennui, rests
By the mill, as we do here ; to pass the time
Looks at the work. The miller, not submissive,
Excites his noble blood. With his own sword
He cuts the wheel-work where the master's hand
Had been most cunning ; then mounts, and
passes on.

The mill is stopped, the miller in despair !

MICHAEL.

We must assist this miller ; with one horse
I'll go to meet him. All must be repaired.
Could I that villain once encounter here,
Soon would I prune his noble wings of pride.

JULIO.

It were far better if your pinion's pride
Could be a little pruned !

MICHAEL.

How mean you that ?

JULIO.

The muse you love — even sonnets, rhymes, have
made ;

Pardon, that in the flowery meadow thus
Of poesy I have allured you on.

The naked truth was too severe.

MICHAEL.

I love the simple, naked truth ;
The drapery conceals all grace. May I demand
That I may hear the truth ?

JULIO.

It only needs
A more exalted theme, my Angelo,
And you will feel the truth's already here.
The mill is human nature ; the noble's scorn
Is artist's pride ; the sword, a cutting word ;
The blow that broke the wheel, a thrust in the
heart !

MICHAEL.

[perceiving his meaning.]

Ha ! ha !

JULIO.

[with modesty.]

Now you perceive we shall not need
The carriage-horse to saddle ; you can aid
Without, and censure, if your conscience bid ;
From your revenge the culprit will not flee !

MICHAEL.

[angrily.]

Julio, it suits you well to censure thus !

JULIO.

[with warmth.]

O ! why compel me to it, Angelo ?

Think you, I e'er my reverence can forget
For your great soul, your eminence in art ?
No ! reverence for your genius and your art
Constrain me to employ such means ; for not
One mastership, one talent only, asks
My love, but all that in us works with holy
Life, or noble aim ; how unacknowledged
Or how poor it be ; knowing the tree of life,
By us creative genius called, in solitude
Will flourish, on the naked rock, rather
Than in the rich and cultured field.

MICHAEL.

Finely you speak. An orator should be.

JULIO.

I know what you would say. You think the
Artist's word shall be like heroes' deed,
But *do* and *be* ! There you are right. Repeat
I cannot here my heart's warm admiration
At godlike instincts — wisdom, calm and firm.
Man, not an artist only, but a *man* must live,
And thus serene, humanity unfold.
Your mind is rich, be therefore just to me,
And scorn me not that I, a simple man,
Have not the richest gifts of God. From you
Fair speeches will not do ; your act, alone,

Has loosed my tongue, your act alone can
Bind it.

MICHAEL.

What wouldst thou with me, Julio ?

JULIO.

This gifted painter you 've despised and scorned !
Called him a " bungler, abject, mean ! " Is he
A bungler, Angelo ?

MICHAEL

To me he 's nothing !

JULIO.

Is art, then, nothing more to you ?

MICHAEL.

Concerns

Me not what others think of me. Is he
No bungler ? it is well for him. A man
Without good manners I have found him.

JULIO.

His is a courteous and a gentle nature ;
His enemy, the host, deceiving him,
Told him you were a man haughty and proud,

And ill-informed, speaking of what you did
Not know. To insult you, he would urge him;
He hated him.

MICHAEL.

The villain has said that ?

JULIO.

Now, you perceive, Antonio knew you not.

MICHAEL.

One should be courteous, e'en to the unknown.

JULIO.

And were you that ? [*Michael remains silent.*

Michael ! only one word !

What we have seen to-day, so wonderful
And strange, must fill us both with humble
Reverence. You are yourself no blind old man,
Trifles in wood and stone to carve ; without
The soul for excellence in others. True art
Is rare intelligence with you. Your glance,
Sharper than lightning, quite through it passes.
How far this artist feels the godlike gift shining
Within, you know. In the guests' hall are things
Of his ; Leda, so fair, and Danæe, beautiful !
Not mere Madonnas knows he how to paint ;
He has, in Parma, rare fresco pictures done,

With poetry and truth all o'er informed.
Go to the church, and there behold his *Night*;
If then his excellence shine not upon
Your soul, then will it never there be day!

MICHAEL.

Talent — I have just told him, that he has.

JULIO.

Talent ! a miserable word ! a word
That like a copper coin is thrown away
On every beggar. Is nothing seen in
This most splendid canvas, but common talent ?

MICHAEL.

The picture has great faults.

JULIO.

Faults has it, for 't is human ! What has not ?
Believest thou that you have never failed ?
Think you that you want nothing ? Mean you
The sketch alone completes the picture ? No !
What is the sketch ? Help only, but not nature.
It gives no lines. There, where the body ceases,
We name sketching. The color and the life,
With light and shadow, that is painting.
Beauty, reflection, thought in union,
That is rare genius. Do these fail here ?

MICHAEL.

The picture has no elevated style.

JULIO.

What mean you by great style ? I call deep truth
And touching beauty great. The physical
May still be great with mind. *That* have you
shown.

The *spiritually* great needs not extension ;
Nor for sublimity a mass of limb.
In all that you have done there breathes great
power ;

A bold and lofty genius reigns therein.

But man is not a God ; humility

Becomes him, and simple childlike feeling.

This I will support — that physically great

As thou, perhaps, from instinct, and from nature's

Impulse art — Julio, myself, the lesser star

Moving in Raffael's lovelier path,

Have in some measure influenced your orb.

Goodness of heart, which, in the highest art

Must find expression, is, and ever will be,

The element of beauty. And, as in art,

Thus will it ever be in human life.

Wherever it is manifest, I see

The angel conscience, with her wand of lilies,

Leading the pathway to the home of genius.

MICHAEL.

[with suppressed emotion.]

I then feel nothing !

JULIO.

You perceive the whole ;
Feel only in the massive. But the love
Of gentle objects seizes on you, more
Than you yourself believe. How beautiful
In San Pietro sits the holy mother,
With saintlike, tender heart, although of stone,
The pallid body of her son supporting !
In human and deep-felt humility,
Your Adam in the holy Sixtine chapel,
Directed by the Almighty finger,
Leaves innocence and bliss in Paradise !
By God ! there lives and feels nothing in man
That in some hour lives not, and blooms in you.
Yet is your art severe. Art is not rough ;
'T is but a noble antique rust, in which
The consecrated metal shines. Pardon !
If my free speech your nature has offended.
I feel that all I've said is by yourself
Far better known. I said it only to avert
The thunder of your anger from Allegri.
Your word alone has robb'd him of his trust.
His cheerfulness has left him ; your word alone
May give him both again.

MICHAEL.

Hem!

[*Baptista enters.*]

Gentlemen! the carriage is now ready.
Order you that they put on the horses?

MICHAEL.

My Julio, you will attend to this;
I have a word with this my host to speak.

JULIO.

Good!

[*he goes out.*]

MICHAEL.

The gentleman! What has he said of me
There, to the painter, eh?

BAPTISTA.

My dearest sir! what have I said?

MICHAEL.

That I

Was but a dauber, a coarse, rough fellow?

BAPTISTA.

Then may eternal justice punish me
If ——

MICHAEL.

Eternal justice troubles not itself
About such villains as you are ; take care
That temporal justice find you not out.
When one is for the gallows ripe, at last
They're caught. Italian understand you ?

BAPTISTA.

The gentleman is ——

MICHAEL.

“ A coarse colorer.”

[takes his whip from the table.]

To color coarsely, we need a pencil coarse.
What say you, if your back is carmined ?

BAPTISTA.

God protect me !

MICHAEL.

He has much more to do
Than to stand by a villain so unworthy !

[throws down the whip.]

My hands I will not soil with him.

BAPTISTA.

'T was a mistake, your worship, a mistake.

[he runs off.]

MICHAEL.

Ah! run away — The villain's angered me!

Ha! now first I understand the painter here.

[He goes in and sits down before the picture.]

So — this must be observed at leisure.

See what we will when passions rage, the brain

Is not alone confused, blind are the eyes.

Angers me too, the learned prattle. I can

Myself discover how I must judge, and

Julio thinks that he must teach me.

Have I not felt and known all he can tell?

[He seats himself before the picture and observes it calmly and mildly.]

By heaven! that picture is well painted!

That I call painting! and how poetic

The trees, the flowers, the background landscape!

How beautiful the dress! the coloring!

Graceful the mother! yes, God knows she is!

St. John most lovely, and the little Christ!

A pretty child, per Bacco! That is color!

[he pauses with some ill humor.]

And I — the pope constrain'd me once to paint.

Ah! how I drove the Florentinian villains

From out the temple, and placed myself upon

The scaffolding — and half a year I painted —

Was so enraged, I could have killed the pope,

Whene'er he came to view the work. I am
No painter ; *that* I know too well. Sculpture
Is mine, and whate'er belongs to drawing ;
Invention, too, is mine ; but with the palette
I am nothing. But *that* I must allow
This painter understands full well.

[*Giovanni comes out, and seeing the stranger,
stands still and observes him.*]

MICHAEL. [to *Giovanni*.

Come here, my boy. A pretty child, not shy,
From strangers does not try to run. Come ! come
Nearer, little fellow ! [The child goes to him.

Do I see right ?

Within the picture there, is Giovanni !

GIOVANNI.

Yes, indeed, I'm there ; my father *there* has
Painted me !

MICHAEL.

Antonio's son art thou ?

GIOVANNI.

Yes ; my mother, too, is there.

MICHAEL.

Is *there* ?

GIOVANNI.

Yes,

She sits there in the picture.

MICHAEL.

Ha, ha !

GIOVANNI.

And there 's the little Jesus child ; but him
We have not now at home.

MICHAEL.

Not ! where is he then ?

GIOVANNI.

Above there ! There in heaven he sits.

MICHAEL.

Above ?

GIOVANNI.

Yes ! there he sits above the clouds, in heaven,
With other little angel children there.

MICHAEL.

What do they there ?

GIOVANNI.

There play they all together.

MICHAEL.

Thou dearest child ! come sit upon my knee.

GIOVANNI.

Yes, I will ride. I'll sit and ride my horse.
You are my horse ; we'll go on to Parma.

MICHAEL.

Good ! But I must mount thee ; the stirrups
Are not there.

GIOVANNI.

The smith has not yet made them.

MICHAEL.

Yes, well.

GIOVANNI.

[rides.

Ho, ho, go on — the steed must not
Stand still.

MICHAEL.

But are we not at Parma yet ?

GIOVANNI.

Not yet, we are but half the way.

MICHAEL.

But now
The rider must dismount. Take some refresh-
ment
In the Wirthshaus.

GIOVANNI.

Yes, we must something eat.
[*Michael puts his hand in his pocket.*]

GIOVANNI.

What hast thou in thy pocket ?

MICHAEL. [takes out a box.

Wait only —
Dost love bonbons ? art thou allowed to eat them ?

GIOVANNI. [seizes them.

Bonbons indeed I'll eat ; I love them well !

MICHAEL.

Patience ! Is it permitted ?

GIOVANNI.

Yes, I may eat them.

MICHAEL.

Here on my lap, is the place to eat.

GIOVANNI.

No, in the
Wirthshaus must I eat ! while the horse feeds and
rests.

Come, horse ; there, thou hast hay.

[He sticks a bonbon in Michael's mouth.]

MICHAEL.

Thou charming child !
Call me a horse ? That is God's justice !
I called thy father once a bungler —
But by the muses of Olympus,
He is as little that, as I a horse.

[Marie enters.]

GIOVANNI.

There is my mother.

MICHAEL.

That is thy mother ?
A lovely woman — very like the picture.

[He puts the boy off his lap and rises.]

GIOVANNI.

Mother, a stranger here ; gives me bonbons !

MICHAEL.

Madonna ! dare I hope for pardon ?

MARIE.

Noble signor ! I thank your goodness much !

[to Giovanni.

Hast thou thanked also ?

GIOVANNI.

I thank thee, signor !

MARIE.

Uncivil boy ! shouldst *thou* say *thou* ?

MICHAEL.

Ah, let it be, dear mother ; disturb not
Thou, with customs of our modern times, the
Pure paradise of nature.

MARIE.

Children you love ?

MICHAEL.

Because they are so great ! This is your home ?

MARIE.

Yes, this is our cottage.

MICHAEL.

Antonio

The painter, is your husband ?

MARIE.

He is, signor.

MICHAEL.

Is he as lovely in his life as in
His pictures, happy are you in loving him.

MARIE.

My Lord ! his art is but a faint reflection
Of the sun, that in his life 's displayed !

MICHAEL.

Indeed !

MARIE.

Indeed 't is so !

MICHAEL.

You are not gay ;
In sooth you seem not happy. A skilful,
Cheerful man, a lovely wife, a precious child ;
A paradise around your quiet home ;
The elements of life most perfect ! yet —

MARIE.

Yet something 's wanting to make us happy.

MICHAEL.

What, then, is wanting ?

MARIE.

Ah, sir ! good fortune !

MICHAEL.

Genius and love, the choicest gifts of life
The gods e'er grant, are here !

MARIE.

Upon the flower
Preys many a secret worm ! my husband
Has been ill ; susceptible he is, and
Every adverse wound bleeds inwardly.
To-day he has met a great misfortune !

MICHAEL.

I know it well. Angelo has been here,
And has opposed him.

MARIE.

Much he has grieved him.

MICHAEL.

He has perchance informed him of the truth :
Michael perhaps has said he is no painter !

Who knows ? He may have told the truth. He
must,
I think, be well informed.

MARIE.

And did there come
An angel's self from heaven and told it me,
I'd not believe him. I know the highest
And the truest art. I know I love Antonio,
Deeply love him ; whate'er he does is part
Of him, inseparable ! and thus I love
His beautiful and kindred art.

MICHAEL.

That is to you enough ! Without true knowledge,
Without investigation, you *love* alone !

MARIE.

Man may so love ; but sometimes, still with *us*,
To feeling he must turn, and there take refuge.

MICHAEL.

Bravo, Madonna ! you please me greatly ;
Pardon that I have somewhat vexed you ?
Thus must good women think.

But now to what
Concerns this Michael Angelo, he's
A rough fellow, 't is not to be denied !

Trust me, his heart is good. His word is like
The Cyclop's blow ; but yet he can be gentle.
He thinks, and feels, most keenly, for the time ;
Drinks at the fountain, like the camel, much
And long, that he may bear the desert's thirst.
Fearful is the volcano, but also fruitful.
When it has done its fearful work, then men
May plough, and sow their seeds full near ; more
rich
The soil is found. The crater clothes itself
Anew ; the desert blooms with flowers, and fruit,
And all breathes joy, and richer life.

MARIE.

Your words are true.

MICHAEL.

The greatest trifles oft
Are cause of greatest deeds ; the mount sometimes
Brings forth a mouse ; but oftener have mice
Produced the mountain. Be not distressed,
Because the cunning landlord with Antonio
At variance dwells ; not love alone,
But hate and malice, wear before the eyes
A bandage, dark as night.

MARIE.

My lord ! you speak
With wisdom, and with goodness.

MICHAEL.

I here am sent,
By Buonarotti; I am his truest friend,
To say from him, how much he honors, loves
Antonio. Give him this ring, and pray him
To wear it, a pledge of friendship always;
And when they meet again, Antonio 'll learn
The heart of Michael Angelo is good,
Although his word is rough. *[he goes out.*

*[Antonio meantime had come out, but held
himself back.]*

ANTONIO.

Marie ! dear, what said he ?

MARIE.

The strange man ?

ANTONIO.

He ! Michael Angelo ! what said he ?

MARIE.

Antonio, is it possible ! was it himself ?

ANTONIO.

Yes, yes, himself ! the only such on earth.

MARIE.

O, happy fortune ! rejoice, Antonio !

He kiss'd our child ; with friendly goodness
Spake to me. Gave thee this ring. He values,
He even loves thee ! and for our fortune,
He will take thought — the generous man !

ANTONIO.

Ah, is it possible ? Julio was right !

MARIE.

He honors thee and loves thee !

ANTONIO.

And *this* his ring !

Marie, he has prest me deeply low,
Higher, and nobly thus to raise me up !
Dare I, good heaven ! dare I thus believe !
Come ! and let us thank him. Let me press
Him to my heart, and thank him for our bliss !

MARIE.

Ah, he was right — the Buonarotti ! now
There blooms a paradise around our dwelling.

[*They go together into the inn. Baptista comes out, and after a pause, says,*]

That paradise, I will for you complete ;
A serpent there shall enter to destroy.

The curtain falls.

ACT IV.

*A large Picture Gallery in Parma. Octavio.
Baptista with his account-book.*

OCTAVIO.

I am content. All is correct and fair.

BAPTISTA.

A letter have I just received. My son
Writes me from Florence, that he, perhaps, will
Be here this evening.

OCTAVIO.

'T is well. I've trusted
You about Nicolò — take care to keep
The secret safe.

BAPTISTA.

By heaven ! I wonder
Ventures a robber from the Appennines,
The service of your Excellence to try.

OCTAVIO.

As you well know, 't is not the first nor last.
Boldly their robberies the villains drive
Within the forest's depths, that spread between

Our Parma and Reggio, and everywhere
Where booty may present.

Be calm—He is in bonds,
And very soon will others be there too.

BAPTISTA.

How the good suffer! Exposed to such
Determined villains, in the same world to live!

OCTAVIO.

Enough of that! We'll speak of something else.
The painter, our Antonio! Will he
Be here to-day?

BAPTISTA.

He is already far
On the way, and shortly will arrive.

OCTAVIO.

O that Marie could bear him company:

BAPTISTA.

She soon will follow. Where'er is strewn the
corn,

Your Excellence, there fly the doves. To me
The thing seems doubtful. If my gracious Lord
Permits me thus to speak.

OCTAVIO.

What mean you thus ?

BAPTISTA.

Your honor's on the point of marriage now
With Celestine, the lovely bride from Florence ;
She, with her father, the Ricordano,
Will soon be here. How will that ever answer ?

OCTAVIO.

Be not concerned. The lovely Celestine
Is like her name, all heavenly fair ! I,
As a Christian only, love the heavenly,
And love it from my *soul*. But as a *man*
I must enjoy the earth. That lovely maid
Beams on me like the wintry sun ; so cold,
So high, so excellent, so wise. To me
'Tis doubtful if she loves. She deigns her ear
In sole obedience to her father's wishes.

BAPTISTA.

My gracious Lord ! Will she, then, give herself
Away ?

OCTAVIO.

Perhaps — perhaps not. I honor her,
But beg no love. She's rich and beautiful ;
There lives no youth in Florence, who would not

Deem it his highest bliss to hold her hand.
'T would flatter me to call her mine ! To call
That mine, which all desire. But tenderness
Has no part in it. For that Marie,
The sweet Marie, must her rights divide.

BAPTISTA.

But, gracious sir, two women in one house !
Will that succeed ?

OCTAVIO.

O splendidly ! Celeste
Is young, enthusiastic, suspects no ill.
Antonio's wife gently submissive is,
Modest and still, and loving much her lord.
The only thing that makes me anxious is,
That here, within, Antonio must paint ;
Signora is a connoisseur in art ;
Herself with taste and knowledge draws and
paints.

I understand it less — These pictures from
Jeronimo my uncle, heired by me ;
They are as good as other ornaments,
Not more are prized, nor less, than others are.
Should now Antonio paint, and do it ill —
I stand committed. That would injure me,
Fostering a painter, poor, unskilled in art.
I would, at least, a learned *critic* prove.

BAPTISTA.

That would be bad ! The man 's a fool ! That, sir,
You may believe, upon my word —

OCTAVIO.

Silence !

Do you then understand what art is ? you 're
Angry with him !

BAPTISTA.

He will himself inform you —
There comes he through the garden——

OCTAVIO.

Is it true ?

BAPTISTA.

There stands he now, beside the bed of flowers,
Smells of the flowers, and, like a ballad-singer,
Bears his picture on his back.

OCTAVIO.

I 'll step

Aside. Perhaps the palace, the luxury
Perhaps, the hall, and servants, may impose
Upon him ; outward splendor imposes
More than we believe. To-day it must be —
To-day the proposition must be made.
I will not steal what can 't be fairly won. [*goes out.*

BAPTISTA.

[*alone.*

What you steal not, shall still be thine,
Or no Calabrian's revenge is mine! [goes out.

[*Antonio enters the hall, bearing his picture on his back.*]

ANTONIO.

Here am I then, arrived at last! O heaven!
What weariness o'ercomes me! the way so long!

[*He places his picture aside, and throws himself down.*]

The sun so hot and scorching! Ah here —
Here, it is cool and fresh! The great enjoy
All luxuries. In stone palaces, as in the
Hollow'd rock, they dwell, and shun the summer
sun.

Freely ascends the vaulted roof, while broad
Pilasters cast their shade below. Freshly the
Rippling fountain cools the air, and soothes
With murmuring sound! O, happy they
Who thus can dwell! And that shall soon be
mine!

How pleasant 't is to sit on the cool steps,
While in the niches ancient busts of heroes
Look calmly down upon us!

[*He looks around the hall.*

This hall may well indeed be splendid! Ha!
What is that? what do I see? a picture!

'T is full of pictures ! O ! holy virgin !
I stood unconsciously within a shrine,
A temple, where I must kneel and worship.
Italian artists ! here hang on high your
Wondrous works ! O, sacred place, they hang like
Shields over the tombs of heroes, showing
Their glorious deeds. Almighty God !
What shall I first observe ! Madonnas, here —
Heroes, and peasants, landscapes, beasts of prey !
Like as a bee upon a thousand flowers,
Ranges my eye, without the power to rest.
I see not, merely ; what *is* mere seeing ?
I *feel* the power of art ; the glory of
Its presence o'ercomes me, like its child ; kneel
Would I, kneel and weep, within this temple !

[*going nearer.*]

See there ! there hangs a lovely picture !
Ah no ! I've been deceived — that's not even
good.

All, are not, in truth, of equal merit.
What see I there ? That is indeed too pretty,
Too true to nature. An old woman stands
Scouring a kettle. The cat lies sleeping
There ; the boy, lively and blond, blows bubbles
Through the pipe. It never yet occurred to me
That such things could be painted ; and here
They seem so life-like, so plain and lucid —
The kitchen is a real treasure. We must

Observe it through the hollowed hands. How
bright

The sun, through the green leaves, shines on the
Kettle! Who has done this? Is not the name
Beneath? [*He reads.*] "*Unknown, a Flemish pic-
ture —*"

Flemish? what country can that be? Lies it
So far from Italy that it's unknown?
See there! above, there hang great pictures, —
Tables, with flowers, cut lemons, glasses
Half filled with wine, dogs, little birds! Ha, ha!
Those are, indeed, too pretty. Ha, ha, ha!

[*He springs up.*]

Four aged misers counting their money!

Do I see right? *That* is the Savior's birth!
That I know well; by Master Mantegna,
From Rome, 't is painted. The mountain path
winds

Splendidly beneath. How lovely is the child,
And the immortal queen of heaven, as bend
The three wise men before them! Another,
Very like, hangs not far off. How oddly,
Yet how gently, peer out the curious
Oxen, thrusting their noses to the back
Of the Madonna! The Ethiopian
Smiles proudly on; *he* understands it well.
The heavenly child has seized the casket,

Will have it for a plaything. That is from
Albert Duro, an old German. Beyond
The mountains there are men not ignorant
Of art, who thus can paint. Ah heavens!
Behold a heavenly picture! a princely
Woman; how young and beautiful her form!
How beams her eye! how smiles the little mouth!
How splendid is the hat, of Genoa velvet,
Of crimson color, and the wide-folded sleeves.
That's by *da Vinci*! Ah, then, in truth, it is
No wonder! that, *that* is painting. How's this?
A king in the same style, that in his youth
He may have done. No! [*reading*] from Van
Halbein 't is.

He's a good painter, but I know him not
Like Leonardo — although *he's* beautiful!
Our earliest masters, there above, I know
You well! I recognize good friends. *There*
Honest Perugina dost thou live — thy
Lovely green tone still is there — thy charm of
Symmetry and just proportion, both sides alike.
Thy Saint Sebastian too; a noble fellow!
The glorious powers of art are here enthroned!
There hangs a splendid picture in all
The truth of life. Rev'rend old man — ah! 'tis
The holy Job! greatly conceived, and greatly
'T is accomplished. That must be Raffael's —
[*reads.*]

*Fra Bartolomeo ! Ah ! the good monk !
Not every priest, in truth, will equal thee !
But how shall I find time to see them all ?
In the back-ground there hangs a silken curtain,
Perchance the choicest gem concealing there.
That must I see before the patron comes.*

*[He draws back the curtain and discovers the St.
Cecilia of Raffael.]*

That is the holy St. Cecilia ! There
Stands she, harp in hand ! All worldly splendors
Lie scattered, broken, at her feet ! Silent
The harp sinks down — her eye is raised, kindles
Her cheek ! — Hark ! she hears the angelic choirs !
Ha ! who has done that ? That is not painting !
'T is living poetry ! *There*, see I not
The skilful artist, and the greater man ?
'T is genius only — genius, inspired
With sacred feeling, expressed in color !
That would I, too, in my best hours, attain.

*[Octavio in the mean time has entered the hall.
Antonio, wholly lost in the picture, turns abruptly,
and, without greeting, asks,]*

Who has *this* picture painted ?

OCTAVIO.

Raffael !

ANTONIO.

[In violent excitement, without seeing Octavio.]

I—I ALSO AM A PAINTER!

OCTAVIO.

That have
I known, dear friend, for many weeks. You, too,
Must long have known it.

ANTONIO.

Now, now first I feel it true.

OCTAVIO.

[aside.

The vain conceited fool! Baptiste was right.

[To Antonio.

So much the better! This confidence, this
Trust, rejoices me, Antonio! Others
Have stood most humbly in the presence
Of this angel, feeling that they were nothing!

ANTONIO.

[continuing to gaze on the picture.

Yes, that I comprehend. If poverty
Feels not its emptiness in this full life,
It ne'er will feel it.

OCTAVIO.

[aside.

This man is rude.

[to him.]

Is it for this you feel your riches

Are so vast ?

ANTONIO.

My Lord, I feel

Here, here within, the fulness of my life ;
The faith that I'm an artist. There I see
My heart's susceptibility ; the deepest
Feelings of my soul are there expressed,
As in the happiest hours of youth I felt,
But ne'er could find expression. Now I feel
My thoughts will bloom, and from henceforth ex-
pand
Like Raffael's. My soul is not so high,
Nor strong. More flexible my hand, and gentler ;
Than mine, more comprehensive is his mind.
Raffael is serious — I must ever smile —
I am susceptible myself — He touches
Others. God ! what a picture ! Here I know
Myself ! *Here* is my aim. I seek no more !
Near it, I feel myself in heaven ; but, like
A man approaching angels, and while my heart
Burns inwardly with holy joy, and swells
With happiness, humbly I bow my head
To greatness unapproached !

OCTAVIO.

You've brought your picture?

ANTONIO.

My Lord! It stands there in the corner.

OCTAVIO.

Pray bring it nearer.

[Antonio brings the picture forward.]

How beautiful! how true!

How life-like there, the lovely woman sits!

But pardon me! I must sincerely speak;

The drapery is bad. Why have you not

Painted the garment that she wears in life?

By heaven! Marie is far more lovely!

ANTONIO. *[much surprised.]*My Lord, I've sought to draw a living form
Of the Madonna.

OCTAVIO.

And is not your
Marie as lovely, and your *Donna*?

ANTONIO.

Pardon, my Lord! I understand you not.

OCTAVIO.

Ah, now I find it true ! The artist dwells
Not in this world. Imagination is
His world ; creatures of air, and lovely dreams,
He values more than all the gifts of love !
Nor would I challenge thus his choice. Each must
Pursue the path his genius leads. I am
No artist ; no poet am I. To me
Reality is all. The present satisfies !
Thus could we both in peace together dwell ;
For you, the ideal love ! for me, the person !

ANTONIO.

Pardon, my Lord ! I understand you not.
What would you say ?

OCTAVIO.

My dear Antonio !

I'll speak more plain ; more openly I'll speak !
You are a simple man of common sense,
But understand not what we courtiers mean
By delicacy. Poor are you also —
For that I'm sorry — but you will still work on,
Paint lovely pictures, and yet live unknown !
Your light, concealed beneath a bushel, burning
Most splendidly, will help you not. To make
You rich will be my task. This house is large ;

Here daily come Italia's richest nobles.
Here you shall paint, and here live happy !

ANTONIO.

My gracious Lord ! will fortune really smile ?
Is no deception in your generous words ?
From earliest youth a dazzling, wandering light
Has led me onward ; when I would grasp it,
Instantly vanishing, darkness, sudden
And thick, has wrapped me round.

OCTAVIO.

Your happiness,
By all the saints ! shall be my work. Oh !
Horrible it is to see a man, that
We can aid, unhappy !

ANTONIO.

You think most nobly !

OCTAVIO.

Thus you would act.

ANTONIO.

Alas ! I can feel only.

OCTAVIO.

Within your power it lies to make me blest !

ANTONIO.

My noble Lord, you are a child of fortune !
Low and depressed, can I increase your joy ?

OCTAVIO.

My dear Antonio — all is not gold
That glittering shines. I am not happy !

ANTONIO.

[aside.

Ah, the poor gentleman ! both young and rich ;
Most noble and unhappy ! Sir, I pity you !
You've all that man in pride of heart demands.
Is't possible that you're unhappy ?

OCTAVIO.

All —

I possess all but the best and richest gift.

ANTONIO.

And why not that ? The Highest, methinks,
May bless all hearts.

OCTAVIO.

Name you the best, Antonio !

ANTONIO. *[with great sincerity.*

Trust in God ; a peaceful conscience and pure
heart !

OCTAVIO.

[surprised.]

Yes, *that* is best — yes, for heaven the best ;
But for this life, must bloom the best and highest,
Or man's not happy. On this dark earth
The true perception of the beautiful
And godlike, we call love ! It manifests
In noble souls its force, in emulation
Of the great and true ; in love of beauty —
'T is then called genius. To single objects
'T is limited in others. In me to *one*, —
The adoration of a lovely woman.

ANTONIO.

Where is the artist, but intensely strives,
Inward and deep, to feel the love of both
United in his soul ?

OCTAVIO.

But the *muse* alone
Remains the mistress of the artist's *heart*.

ANTONIO.

Because the *muse* is *ever* the beloved !

OCTAVIO.

His muse he must full oft exchange ; nine
Only are there — lovely sisters all, but
All too few to please all artists.

ANTONIO.

One gift
Alone, the favored wooer gains ; and
Every artist loves one muse alone —

OCTAVIO.

Raffael the great, before whose holy saint
You bent your reverent head, had more than one.

ANTONIO. *[with emotion.*

Alas ! the poor Raffael ! he none possessed.

OCTAVIO.

Raffael no muse ?

ANTONIO.

Ah ! yes, in heaven !

In his deep longings, his aspirations !
That, which he called his great ideal —
Divine and God-inspired. *There* has his soul,
His yearning soul, the great ideal found.
No longer turns his noble upward eye
To the blue vault, seeking his saint divine !
Now he has found ! in heaven, he loves her !
Here sought he her in vain ! Poor Raffael !
Therefore, his thirsting, suffering spirit
Sank in a sea of sense, and drank oblivion.

OCTAVIO.

Happier, then, art thou?

ANTONIO.

By heaven, I am !
Thou, poor Raffael ! what did it avail
That thus inspired and beautiful thou wert ?
Ah, what availed thy powerful friends, the pope,
And Rome ? the cardinal's niece, thy shameless
Fornarina ? On earth thou foundest not
The happiness of earth — its truest joy —
A lovely, faithful, trusting woman !
For thee was no Marie found. Richer,
More blest, within my little hut, than thou
With all thy fame !

OCTAVIO.

Antonio, art thou sure
Thou lovest Marie from the heart ?

ANTONIO.

My Lord, as sure as that I live myself !

OCTAVIO.

'T is well — I mean, 't is well for thee ; for me
'T is otherwise. Farewell ! I'll not disturb your
bliss.

[Antonio appears much astonished.]

I had believed you loved the muse alone.
Your wife a lovely model only was ;
That you would love whate'er would flatter her,
And she, to aid her vain and frivolous will ;
Therefore I brought you here to Parma.
Most happy thus, I would have veiled my own
Heart's wish in making others blest. The veil
Has fallen, and my eyes unsealed. Thou
And thy wife are both enthusiasts true ;
Reality, it may be, or a dream —
Real is that alone that makes us blest.
God wills it so. Here could you not remain,
Antonio ! But fear me not. I would not
Play the fox by night, and from your dove-cote
Steal. Doves I love well, but not to steal or rob ;
In open day, upon the public mart,
I'll purchase me the best. God bless you ! Greet
Your lovely wife. By heaven, I meant it well —
And honorably with all. Farewell ! Has
Any to complain ? 'Tis surely I ! Remain
Long as you will. Baptiste will bring the gold.
[*he goes.*]

ANTONIO.

[*alone—remains astounded.*]

This was his meaning — *this* his love of art,
His reverence for the artist ! *this* his
Support — his patronage ! Fool that I am.

An ignis fatuus has misled again.

But I'm revenged! He went from me ashamed
And humbled. Revenged? Ashamed? No! I'm
The culprit — *bearing* the offence! Good God!
Did I not stand a simple lamb — insulted,
In his presence. *[after a pause, with violence.*

The shame I will not bear!

I'll have revenge! The weapon shall decide!
A noble is he? Of noble ancestors the heir?
Mine is a noble spirit — a chosen one —
To live recorded in the book of time,
When he lies mould'ring and forgotten. *[pauses.*
The sword? I understand it not — The pistol
Shall revenge me. Revenge me? *[a long pause.*

Am I

A murderer? Bear rather an offence. Bear
Seven times seventy rather! And should
I fall! beloved Marie, my Giovanni!
And thou adored, ennobling art — Ha!
This mad excitement — it is too absurd.
Warriors may fight; with them, contempt of
death

Is duty; danger to them is pastime;
Otherwise to act would be dishonor.
The artist works with mind. To him belongs
Spiritual power, and the air of peace.
The enchanter's wand, and not the sword,
Has God placed in his hand. Life to create,

But not destroy, is his. Insult and scorn
 Were borne by our great model. I will endure,
 As in this world is still the fate of him
 Who for the noblest and the highest strives ;
 To martyrdom he must resign his life,
 For after death begins he first to live !

[*a pause.*]

Alas ! I cannot now observe this hall.
 These splendid works o'erpower my senses.
 What have I lived through in this hour ! — sweet
 hopes,
 The highest joy, wonder and love ; despair,
 Illness and insult ! Alas, I'm weary ;
 My eyes are darkened, my spirit fails. All —
 All that has been my life's desire environs
 Me, and yet I faint beneath it ; my limbs
 Refuse support. Here will I rest before
 I wander back the rough and weary way.

[*He sits upon a sofa in the corner and falls asleep.*
Ricordano enters with his daughter, Celestina. The
latter has a wreath of laurel in her hand.]

RICORDANO.

Here are we, now, my daughter.

CELESTINA.

As strangers,

Father ? Is't not so ?

RICORDANO.

As thou wilt, Celeste.

CELESTINA.

No, my father! as thou wilt.

RICORDANO.

Thy happiness, —
 Thy happiness, by heaven! is all I wish.
 To find it with Octavio is not
 Thy will, my child. Be't so — I give it up.
 His levity alone's to thank, — young fool!
 My first opinion still remains; his heart
 Is good.

CELESTINA.

His heart! Has he a heart?

RICORDANO.

Women
 Believe the heart alone should have a voice.

CELESTINA.

There spake a man whose heart and soul alike
 Would dictate *all* that's good. Octavio has none!
 Father, believe me, none! He is not bad,
 Self-loving only; proud he is, and cold —
 His soul's a desert. I *cannot* love him —

He loves me not — and yet my father wishes —

RICORDANO.

Now be it so ! I will forget I promised —
Promised my friend Lorenzo, at his death,
The alliance of our son and daughter
The union of our houses to cement.
Hastily 't was done. God will forgive it !

CELESTINA.

Heaven will rejoice, my father ! most happy
Hast thou made thy daughter !

RICORDANO.

Ah, when I think —

By heaven, it were a sin — a rose-bud
Such as thou ! I am thy father, yet God
Himself gave thee thy heart, thy fervent soul.
Free from self-love, I may affirm 't were sin,
A rose-bud such as thou, in hard and desert
Ground to plant, when ev'ry Florence gard'ner
Is striving in that paradise around
The blossom to transplant.

CELESTINA.

Am I a little flower, my father ?

In the safe shadow of thy oak I'll bloom ;
Firm round thy stem my tendrils I will twine.

RICORDANO.

Feels, then, thy heart no love, my child ?

CELESTINA.

To thee !
To God ! for all that's true and beautiful.

RICORDANO.

And — for no lover ?

CELESTINA.

[*blushing.*

No.

RICORDANO.

[*presses her to his heart.*

Thou innocent ! the time
Will come. The little rogue will be avenged !

CELESTINA.

Time will take care, my father !

RICORDANO.

Thou little muse !
Thus must I name thee ! As the marble, cold,

Nature and art dwell in thy heart alone !
For whom intendest thou this laurel crown ?

CELESTINA.

How can I tell, my father ? The branch bent
Towards me as I passed, and caught me by
My hair. To punish it I tore it from
The stem, and in my hand it formed a crown.

RICORDANO.

No doubt to crown thy Raffael. There hangs
the gem.

CELESTINA.

Ah, God ! the splendid hall.

RICORDANO.

And canst thou leave it ?
Of thy beloved art, the splendid temple.
It may be thine !

CELESTINA.

Dearest father, say, these
Pictures couldst thou purchase from Octavio ?

RICORDANO.

Celeste ! dost know the value of this hall ?

CELESTINA.

No! for 't is priceless — Octavio will decide —
His pictures does he love less than his gold;
Is *that* to him more precious than thy child —
To part with *them* will he decide; my father,
Thou wilt win — Thou 'lt give him gold, and keep
Thy child.

RICORDANO.

Enchantress! Circe! remain thou here;
Gather rich joy from out the precious works;
'll seek Octavio within; to him
Impart thy firm resolve, and my desire;
He will therein find his account.

CELESTINA.

He will!

A courtier is he, fine and delicate:
This sacrifice, believe me, costs him nothing.

RICORDANO.

If not his wife, yet always as his friend,
His sister, thou 'lt remain?

CELESTINA.

If thus 't is understood,
My father, then as a sister, as a friend,
Oft, as to-day, I 'll visit — his pictures.

RICORDANO.

Ha ! thou art wicked !

CELESTINA.

Tell him I'll come again.

RICORDANO.

'T will be discourteous — after the basket !

CELESTINA.

Father ! 'T is all a joke ! I'll fill with flowers
His basket. *[Ricordano goes out.]*

[Celestina alone.]

Alone with my loved art ! Forever
Shall I leave the beautiful within this hall ?
Ah no ! my father, then, the whole must purchase.
What ! shall then these gems, with dust and rain
Corroding, here with savages remain ?
No noble soul to prize, to worship them !
No genius here to offer up its love !
O, St. Cecilia, at thy feet my laurel
Crown I'll lay ; more noble there than on the
Brows of kings.

What do I see — a picture ?
A new picture, turned towards the wall.
Is't possible Octavio can pictures buy ?

[She turns the picture and looks at it with astonishment and admiration.]

What do I see ? Ah, do I dream ? This is
No other than a painting from Allegri,
Antonio Allegri, the unknown,
The new, the wonderful, the unknown artist
Of whom so much was said by Angelo.
From whom so many graceful heads I've copied.
At parting, Angelo gave him his ring,
And will commend him to the Duke.

[*She observes the picture attentively.*]

Ah Heaven ! how splendid and how life-like !
The virgin mother ! how angel-like the face !
How full of mildness and humility !
The Savior smiles with majesty divine !
And Giovanni ! I could take the boy
Upon my breast ; a thousand times caress him.
Ah, what a sweet, heart-winning child ! Surely
'T is painted after nature. So life-like
Could never be imagined. O, lovely
Picture ! what genius and what color !

[*She stands deeply lost in thought, then says,*]

This picture I must crown. The princely laurel
Bent down its head for *this*, and held me by
Its branch — a prophecy of what I see.
Could I but crown the artist ! His picture
Wears the crown, instead of him.

[As she is about to lay the crown upon the picture, she becomes aware that Antonio sleeps in the room. She starts back astonished, but immediately recovers her self-possession.]

How deep his sleep ! How in the picture hall
Could he find entrance ?

[She approaches nearer.]

No noble is he ;
Far less a peasant. A servant he is not ;
His humble dress betokens poverty ;
His mind's refinement, by its simple care.
How pale, with princely features ; expanded,
broad
The noble brow ! a splendid head ! Heavens !
Do I see right ? the ring upon his hand —
Angelo's ring. God ! this must be himself,
Must be Allegri — Antonio Allegri !
Himself has brought the picture, and wearily
He sleeps, oppress'd with heat and worn with toil.

[She looks at him with great sympathy, and then, as she sees that he sleeps deeply, she kneels before him to observe his face.]

Ah Heaven ! how noble his expression !
The traces of deep suffering he bears ;
And yet he's young. Dare I, thou noble soul,
To place the crown around thy brows ?

[*She stands up.*]

Shall it there rest ?

No ; Heaven forbid ! — Should he awake ? — No !
The crown shall hang upon the picture ; then —
When he awakes, he'll know we value it.

[*She hangs the laurel upon Correggio's picture.*]

Ah no, that will not do ; 't is vain and cold.
The living artist sits with bare head ; the frame
Supports the living wreath. All ye good saints !
Aid me, that I succeed.

[*Trembling, she places the wreath upon the head
of Antonio, and then draws quickly back.*]

Thus shall it be !

FOREVER, in its destined place, shall 't rest
Upon that brow ! How beautiful it shines,
With his dark hair entwined ! How splendidly
The brow supports the crown ! Thank God, 't is
placed !

[*She retires quickly.*]

Farewell, Antonio ! we shall meet again.
How deep his sleep, sweet his repose ! He
breathes !

[*Celestina goes quickly out.*]

ANTONIO.

[*starts as if awaking from a dream.*]

Where am I now ? This hall is not Elysium.

[*He recollects.*]

Ah, Heaven! I've slept and dreamed! no!
More than dreamed. 'T was a foretaste of bliss!
Methought, within those blessed fields I stood,
More bright and fair than those of Dante were;
The temple of Minerva reared itself
Within a living grove, that's sacred to
The muse. Of purest marble fashioned 't was,
With granite pillars and colossal forms.
Within 't was filled with books and paintings rare.
Around me were assembled the sublime —
The great of ancient and of modern times.
Artists of every age; sculptors and poets,
Painters and architects. There Phidias sat
On that gigantic form of Hercules,
The wonder of all time; and while his soul
Breathed harmony, the chisel formed the
Giant mass to beauty and perfection.
Apelles dipped his brush in morning blushes,
And smiling drew on floating clouds, that angels
Bore along to heaven, enchanting pictures!
There Palestrina, at an organ placed,
The four winds aiding him, music awoke,
That spread its melody o'er all the world,
While by his side Cecilia stood, and sang!
Homer, the gray and blind old man, sat by
The sacred fount. He spake, and reverently
The poets listened.

Raffael, exalted there, more beautiful
 Than life, bearing upon his shoulders wings
 Of transparent silver, seizing my hand,
 Drew me within the circle. Then stepped forth
 A matchless form, the inspiring muse, a fair
 And beautiful young virgin, as blooming
 As the morning rose, pure as the dew, [hand
 The stainless morning dew. With snow-white
 She placed a laurel crown upon my head.
 “*Thee!* to immortality I consecrate,”
 She said, and as I waked, she vanished.
 It is most wonderful — but yet I feel
 The wreath upon my head —

[*He raises his hand and takes the crown from his head.*]

O God! 't is so!

Are there yet miracles upon the earth?

[*At this moment, Baptista enters with Nicolo, the latter bearing a sack of copper coin.*]

ANTONIO.

My friend Baptista, who has been here?

BAPTISTA.

[price

How should I know? Lo, here we bring the
 His Lordship grants you for your picture;
 You must receive the sum in copper coin;
 In that most fitting 't is the nobleman

Should pay his peasants' debts. 'T will bear you
down;

But you are used to bearing burthens. Great
Painter as you are, you'll not forget your
Father carried burthens. The weight upon
Your shoulders borne will tell you of your birth.

ANTONIO.

Baptista, I pray you to give me silver;
If not all, that which to-day'll suffice.
Behold I'm weary — the way is long —
Already, once to-day, I've travelled it.
Good friend, do me the favor.

BAPTISTA.

How! good friend?
My enemy you were, and thus remain.

ANTONIO.

What have I done to you?

BAPTISTA.

The scorn and shame
To-day I suffered from Michael Angelo,
I owe to you.

ANTONIO.

What do I know of that?

BAPTISTA.

Enough, enough! there is your money. That
I've substracted which you owed to me.
Now get you gone.

ANTONIO.

You are insolent! restrain your anger.

BAPTISTA.

I'll cool it rather.

ANTONIO.

Do only what you can
'Fore God defend. I fear you not. Do what
You will — Eternal Justice will do right.
Farewell! I leave you without anger now.
My courage will the burthen not abate.

*[He places the laurel upon his head, and the sack
upon his back.]*

"Thy bread thou shalt consume in pain," the
Lord

Has said; and in thy sweat shall earn it.
This burthen, should it press me to the ground,
The sacred crown shall elevate my head.

[He goes.]

BAPTISTA.

The sack is heavy. What think'st thou, Nicol?

NICOLO.

Is there much money?

BAPTISTA.

Seventy scudii only;

But what is that in value to the ring
He bears upon his finger — Michael's ring.
That is invaluable! What is the hour?

NICOLO.

We have an hour, I think, before the ave.

BAPTISTA.

The sun then sinks; the dusky twilight will
Obscure all color. You must this evening,
After Correggio — the wood is shady —
Loiter, he will not *there*. What I would say —
Nicol, thou hast to-day permission asked
To visit thy mother! Well, thou canst go!
To-morrow, early, thou must again be here.

NICOLO.

Sir, I give you many thanks. You grant me
Greater joy than you believe.

BAPTISTA.

Say not so; I know the joy to visit
The beloved, the relative.

NICOLO.

Thanks once more!

[He goes out.]

BAPTISTA.

He goes! most excellent! Am I, in fact,
A robber, murderer? Then show it now!
What have I said to urge him on? Allowed
A son to visit his mother — a work
Most Christian and compassionate. Free is
My conscience. Does Allegri fall? he falls
From providence of God, not from my act —
From my revenge. I wash my hands —
My conscience's free!

The curtain falls.

ACT V.

SCENE. — *A wood. In the back-ground is the cabin of Silvestro. A large gnarled oak stands near the cabin, and is formed into a chapel. A niche in the trunk, formed by the bark turning outwards, makes a shrine in which hangs Correggio's picture of the Magdalene. Small stone steps lead up the tree, where the bent branches form the dome of a temple. Large poplars are in the fore-ground; and on the right hand bubbles a clear fountain from the stony ground, that winds like a brook through the wood and meadow.*

Valentino, an old robber, robust and strong, sits looking thoughtfully at the fountain. His complexion is dark olive. His long hair is confined in a green net; above it, a large sombrero hat. Two pistols are in his belt, a sword by his side, and a musket slung to his back.

VALENTINO.

How change the times! and with the times we
change

Our thinking and our being. Thirty years since,
When full of scorn and hate of this proud world,
I wandered through this wood, the shadows
Of these trees within my breast created thoughts

Of dark revenge. Met I a hollow tree,
It served me as a screen from whence to seize
The lonely, nightly wanderer. The flowers
Looked in my face like noisome weeds, only
To trample down; and passed there through the
wood

A lovely woman — I pricked my ears,
And like the tiger sprang upon her. When
I had compassed an heroic deed, calmness
And joy descended to my heart. Then crept I
To my cave, and with my servants boasted
Myself a Pluto, brother to Jove! Now
Is it changed — old age comes on. The cave
Becomes more gloomy, sad and lonely to me.
All seems to whisper, “forever, wilt thou
Dwell there? Enjoy the light while it is granted.”
“Valentino the old.” That name once blanched
The lip that spoke it. Shuddering mothers,
To still their children’s cries, pronounced it.
The judge was silent when he heard it, and
Let fall his pen! My confidence has not
This breast deserted, rather it seems withdrawn —
From whence is this?

Ah, many crimes have I
Committed! have pierced the traveller
Through the heart, cut many windpipes;
Maidens seduced, both fair and innocent;
Have taken much money — but not a day

Have lived without at least three paternosters.
The mass has known my presence ever, with
Absolution to purchase future sins.
Might I not pass through such a life, with
Courier speed to heaven ?

Ah, the sad fear

That I must creep, like Vetturino, up [me.
The thorny path, sometimes comes chilling o'er

[*Silvestro comes out from his cabin, kneels before
the Magdalene, and repeats his evening prayer.*]

That is Silvestro, the ancient hermit ;
A timid man ; pale, haggard in the face —
Yet powerful is his eye, flashing with light.
I'm strong, and, like the ripened harvest, brown ;
But if my face I chance to see reflected
Within the mirror of the brook, my eye
Is troubled — cold and pale like Saturn's,
And wavers with uncertain light. So deadly
Is *one only* thought ; and trust and hope,
So healing to the soul.

SILVESTRO.

[*rises and goes to meet Valentino.*

God bless you, brother !

VALENTINO.

I thank you, brother. Do you know me ?

SILVESTRO.

You are a hunter.

VALENTINO.

Yes, a sharp-shooter.

SILVESTRO.

In that we're brothers.

VALENTINO.

We are both old men.

SILVESTRO.

And both are weary of the world. Brother !
Let's turn our eyes from this, to the Eternal.

VALENTINO.

If that would help us ?

SILVESTRO.

Why should it not ?

VALENTINO.

You are a pious man ; at the first knock
St. Peter will admit you in, but I —
I'm different. I'm a wild fellow — a
Hunter am I — and in the wood have slain
Innocent creatures !

SILVESTRO.

A robber were you,
And should repent and turn to mercy ; at
Death's last hour you would succeed.

VALENTINO.

Silvestro !

Do you know me ?

SILVESTRO.

I know you, Valentino !

VALENTINO.

And *fear* me not ?

SILVESTRO.

Far less ; I rather hope
Your heart to bind, and, God's help in aid,
To drive from thence all sin and pain.

VALENTINO.

Ah ! can

You know the temper of my mind ?

SILVESTRO.

Full well.

Not merely rocks and trees perceive your grief!
I know it also.

[*Robbers enter, bringing Franz Baptista.*]

BRUNO.

[*a robber.*]

See ! here 's a fellow travelling with money,
And a full knapsack ! Permit me, captain,
To ruffle his feathers and then to wring
His neck. Son of the host — Baptista's son
Is he — from Correggio.

A ROBBER.

A filthy villain ! In our mechanic-work
He's called us bunglers.

ANOTHER.

A cooling drink,
Lodging at night, he's oft refused us ; and,
As poor workmen, denied us all skill in
Workmanship.

[*The robbers attempt to carry Franz off. He throws himself at the feet of Valentino.*]

FRANZ.

Have mercy on me !

VALENTINO. [*draws his dagger.*]

Take him away ! the viper !

[*Silvestro takes the picture of the Magdaline in one hand, and with the other seizes Valentino's arm.*]

SILVESTRO.

Have mercy! What has the poor youth done to
thee?

Conquer thy spirit! Works not great nature,
In her vastness infinite, upon thy
Sterile soul? spare the youth. Soil not with blood
This sacred image. *[he shows the crucifix.*

Behold this naked skull!

Thou shalt become like this! See, this holy book,
Wherein 't is written, "thy neighbor thou shalt
love." *[showing the Magdaline.*

This was a sinner! The heroine tore
Herself from sin. The virgin saved her
In her penitence. Repent thou also!
Ah, Valentino, save thy soul!

VALENTINO.

[starts back as he looks upon the picture.

Let be!

By Heaven, the saint herself is here!
Is present! not in her picture only — herself
Has seized my hand, and held it back from crime.
Look at her — all — the Sancta Magdaline!
The intercessor for the worst of sinners.
Look at her, robbers! she's *our* patron saint.

*[All the robbers take off their hats as they look
at the picture, and kneel reverently.]*

You see her all — how beautiful she is !

Ora pro-nobis — Sancta Magdaline.

[*The robbers all repeat the ora pro-nobis, and cross themselves.*]

[*To Franz.*

Go, then, in peace ; for thy salvation,
Thank this saint, and, after her, the artist
Who conceived the picture, before whose soul
The saint was manifest.

SILVESTRO.

[*To Franz.*

Allegri was the painter, Antonio
Allegri, thy father's neighbor. [Franz goes.
To Valentino.] I thank thee !

VALENTINO.

[*abruptly.*

To-morrow we will meet again !

[*Silvestro goes into his cabin.*]

NICOLO.

[*enters.*

Captain ! 't is lucky that I meet you here.
A painter from Correggio, Antonio
Allegri, will soon pass by. He bears
A heavy sack of copper money, and,
Of far more value, a ring — the seal ring
Of Michael Angelo.

VALENTINO.

Cowardly wretch ! an artist would thou rob —
An artist that can paint such pictures ?
O, that thy iron heart such thoughts should harbor !
Like us, with the wide world in contest, lives
The artist. Like us, he's scorned and shunned.
The robber and artist are of one sect —
Both shun the worn and dusty path of life,
The maxims and the rules of common men,
And seek for shady paths through flowery woods.
Infamous wretch ! an artist wouldst thou rob,
And think'st thyself a hero ! For this have I
Sent thee to princes — to rich men's houses,
That the poor worker of day labor free
May go, and eat his bread in safety !
Thou sham'st the devil ! and deservest not
To live in honorable fellowship
Among brave men !

NICOLO.

Yet I thought ——

VALENTINO.

Thought as thou art !
Robbers, all ! to-day I have much to say.
For a short time can I remain among you.
I'm old, and conscience claims its rights. My
sweat

And courage long have served you. The sceptre
Should an old king lay aside, and I will
Do so also. While I am with you, you
Shall not murder. The rich to plunder, I
Give free leave ; but spare the poor man. This is
My law. Free through the wood Antonio
Must pass. No bird of night shall meet him there,
But those that sing him to repose.

[All the robbers go out.]

[Antonio comes in bearing the heavy sack upon his back, the laurel wreath on his bare head. He throws the sack by the fountain, and sits down by it.]

ANTONIO.

I can no longer — strength is exhausted.
Thank God ! here flows the living fountain !
Ah, had I a cup — my cap ? In Parma
I have left it, not to rob the laurel
Of its place — my hand will serve.

[He takes up water with his hand.]

It slakes it not — rather augments my thirst !
Ah, I am weary — could I reach my home,
And bring this money to my loved ones.

[pauses.]

The night draws on. How will Marie tremble
When darkness falls, and I not there ! Ha !
How springs the blood to my faint head !

[*He takes off the laurel crown and looks at it.*]

My temples burn, but this is fresh and cool.

"Thee to immortal fame I consecrate."

Immortal fame begins but after death!

Ha! was it so meant, my angel goddess?

[*Lauretta, a peasant girl, passes through the wood, singing, with a pitcher on her head.*]

Who goes so gaily, singing through the wood?

Lauretta 't is, our neighbor's daughter,

Goes to the field to seek and milk her goats.

LAURETTA.

Do I see right? Is't Master Anton sits there?

ANTONIO.

Good evening, Lauretta.

LAURETTA.

You've come at last.

Your good wife, Marie, is very anxious,

That you remained away so long, Antonio!

No wonder with the long way you're wearied.

ANTONIO.

Wilt thou, dear child, give me to drink a draught?

Lend me your cup: I've nothing to draw with.

LAURETTA.

Where is your cap ?

ANTONIO.

In Parma have I left it.

LAURETTA.

And what have you upon your head ? Ah, ha !
I see, a laurel crown — well it becomes you.
But who has placed it there ?

ANTONIO.

The muse celestial !

LAURETTA.

Over your dreams, you artists *all* forget.
Should I once marry, I will have no *wit* ;
I'll take a man who'll not forget his wife.

ANTONIO.

Surely, Marie, I never have forgot.
[*Lauretta fills the pitcher, and gives Antonio water.*]

LAURETTA.

Antonio, drink ! and let it soothe thy thirst :
A cooling draught comes from the world beneath.

ANTONIO.

[*smiling.*

I thank thee, lovely, young Rebecca !
For thee a husband I'll provide.

LAURETTA.

Why not ?

ANTONIO.

[*tries to rise.*

I must go on. [sinks down again.
I'm faint and weary.

LAURETTA.

Longer rest ; Marie and Giovanni
Are on the way to meet you ; together
Can you seek your home. Master Antonio,
You are too sad ; that comes from painting
Holy pictures. Rest here — a little song I'll sing
To soothe you ; by the running water, 't will
Sound most sweetly.

ANTONIO.

Ah, yes, dear child, 't will

Make me cheerful.

LAURETTA.

[*sings.*

The elf-queen dwells in the rock-caved hall ;
The pilgrim sits by the waterfall ;
The waves well up, white as the snow,
Deep from the rocky caves below.

"Pilgrim! spring thou in the wave's deep bed,
And the elfin queen shalt thou surely wed."

Then the pilgrim turns so deathly pale;
From weariness, his limbs him fail.
The elf-queen stands with golden hair,
The cup she reaches, with water fair;
He sips the cup in the evening red,
And falls to the earth — the pilgrim's dead!

There passes a shudder through his blood,
The pilgrim has tasted the death-cold flood!
Quickly he sinks in the cavern profound;
His bones lie bleaching on the damp ground!

[*When Lauretta has ended the song she starts up.*]

LAURETTA.

Now, fare you well! soon will Marie come!

ANTONIO.

I thank you much.

LAURETTA.

No cause.

ANTONIO.

[*alone.*]

No cause — indeed!

There thou art right! a horrid song! a death-tone
Terrible, from out the dark and lower world.
Not lovely Italy that thistle bore
Upon its fragrant bosom. Thy mother

Taught thee that, blond Lombardine ; and she
From hers has learnt it — and so on, up to
The ancestress, who madly hung herself
Because her husband, the barbarian,
Had lost a battle !

She said *farewell*, and not
A Dieu ! gave me the cup — the cup of death —
The elfin golden-haired — through blood and
bone
It sent a shudder ! Ah, I have *lived*
This song !

[*He recalls his self-possession. Is a moment silent, then with a smile.*]

With fancy is it, as with every gift,
With every spark of living fire ; e'er death
It brightly, boldly flashes forth ! Be it !
I tremble not at this. Were she the elf-queen ?
In Parma, then, that lovely dream that crowned
My head, was the celestial muse ! and ah,
Not desolate will my Marie be !
She is the bride of Heaven. No orphan,
Fatherless, is Giovanni ! an angel
He, that with the Agnus Dei follows
Marie here on earth, adding the glory
Of the Christian faith, to aid the genius
Of high art — yes, so it is.

[*With a lighter heart.*]

How beautiful the night ! how blue and cool !
Like angels' wings the coolness fans and soothes
My brow. A gentle rain falls in the east.
The sun sinks calmly in the west, and paints
A lovely rainbow on the southern mist.
How joyfully the verdure meets the sun,
Like hope, that brightens at eternity !
To me it seems as though the primal colors,
As when they first were severed by the prism,
Now, in pure light, shone on me to take leave.

[*He lifts the sack.*]

Thou heavy burthen of this mortal life,
Mammon of riches ! for the last time
I lift thy ponderous weight ; thou art the foe
Of him who 'with the earthly strives ; the barter
Of my mind, with leaden weight, presses me down.

[*Sinks down again.*]

O come, Marie ! my Giovanni, come !
One moment only — for a last farewell !
Grant me, sweet Heaven, this dearest joy,
Then will I go in peace.

[*He rises and goes on. Marie enters from the other side with Giovanni, who carries the Agnus Dei staff in his hand.*]

GIOVANNI.

Our father ! wherefore, dear mother, comes he not ?

MARIE.

He soon will come. To-day he 'd much to do
In Parma.

GIOVANNI.

Mother, 't is dark already. I fear !

MARIE.

Thou needst not. Who is not wicked, Giovanni,
Never can fear the darkness nor the night.

GIOVANNI.

Just now the sky was blue and lovely,
And little clouds of all bright colors
Played with each other ; now all is gone ;
The sun has gone beneath, and all is dark,
But a red stripe, as red as blood.

MARIE.

The moon !

Seest thou her lovely face, there through the
branches ?

GIOVANNI.

Yes, that is Luna. When the sun sinks down.
Her light begins to shine.

MARIE.

Her light is mild and calm, and soothes the mind.
[*She sits down by the fountain.*]

GIOVANNI.

About the grass there grow forget-me-nots,
Mother ! Shall I a crown weave for my father ?
[*The child goes to gather the forget-me-nots.*]

MARIE.

[*alone.*]

Anxious and fearful — why do I form such
Frightful pictures ? Of no misfortune, yet,
Has knowledge reached me ; and if it had,
Lies not in th' eternal power that formed
This picture, my only hope, my highest trust ?

LAURETTA.

[*sings without.*]

There passes a shudder through his blood !
The pilgrim has tasted the death-cold flood !
Quickly he sinks in the cavern profound,
His bones lie bleaching on the damp ground !

[*And then enters.*]

MARIE.

Tell me, Lauretta ! Antonio hast thou seen ?

LAURETTA.

Well ! yes, I gave him drink, sang him a song.

MARIE.

Ah Heaven! where is he?

[*They perceive Antonio in the distance.*]

LAURETTA.

See! there he comes;
Now you'll be happy! you're both as much
In love as though not married; lovers only,
Lovers betrothed. I'll not disturb your joy.

[*she goes out.*]

[*Antonio enters, pale as death. He throws the sack down.*]

MARIE. [*extremely alarmed.*]

Antonio!

ANTONIO.

Marie! here's gold. For a short time
Thou and the boy will suffer not — no more!
May the good God support and help you both!

MARIE.

Antonio! O holy mother!

ANTONIO. [*embraces her.*]

That,

Thou art not! O no! thou art my faithful
Wife, thou poor deserted widow. Thank God!

The hot wild blood has had free course. The air
My breast refreshes.

MARIE.

Thou art pale and bleeding !

ANTONIO.

No, bloodless, my dear child. A part, the earth
Has taken. Those fevered dreams passed with
The fevered blood. That was Lauretta,
The fair young maiden with the golden hair !
Not my Atropos ! a wicked demon not !

MARIE.

Antonio !

ANTONIO.

And thou ? thou art my wife,
My son is Giovanni — beings like
Myself ; not wandering spirits of the
Air, without compassion, as they suffer not !
Ah, too much, too much thou'lt suffer !

MARIE.

I ! unfortunate !

ANTONIO.

Despair not ! Give me

The bride's kiss, my beloved ! Fear not ! the lips
Are only bloodless — violet pale. With
Water of the fountain, my life has passed
Away. 'T was but the transient dust upon
The Psyche's wing, that newly born, rises
To heaven !

MARIE.

O, no, Antonio ! Thus shall it end ?

ANTONIO.

Thus must it ever end ! Sooner or late,
What does it matter ? One moment only !
And, O Marie ! upon that bitter moment
Follows eternity.

MARIE.

O my beloved !

ANTONIO.

Assure me that thou wilt bear that moment ;
Thy tears shall be, not tears of sacrifice,
But gently flow, pure pearls of love, the heart
Relieving, and with quiet peace soothing
Our parting.

MARIE.

Go then in peace ! I promise thee !

ANTONIO.

In God's name, now farewell! beloved!
Where is my son?

MARIE.

[calls.]

Giovanni? He gathers flowers.

ANTONIO.

Flowers
For his father's grave. Go in, Marie, and
Call our ancient friend, Silvestro. The blessed
Eucharist he'll bring me.

MARIE.

He sleeps! yet —

Must I go —

ANTONIO.

Yes, he will come. Tremblest thou,
My love?

MARIE.

[Kisses him on the brow, and looks trustingly to
heaven.]

I go — thou 'lt see me soon again, Antonio!

ANTONIO.

[Looks with deep tenderness on her face, and
pressing her hand.]

Ah soon ! the separation will be very brief !

[*Giovanni comes in.*]

Come, Giovanni ! my child, come hither.
What hast thou there ?

GIOVANNI.

A wreath, my father !
Of forget-me-nots ; a crown, a crown for thee.

ANTONIO.

Thou little innocent ! thou fatherless !
God for the orphan will take care.

GIOVANNI.

Thou, father,
Wilt take care of me.

ANTONIO.

Kneel down, my son.

[*He kneels. Antonio lays his hand upon his head.*]

My son, observe — this is thy father's blessing.
More can I not ; and yet in his last hour
The blessing of a father is not lost.

GIOVANNI.

[*kisses his hand.*]

Thou art so pale, my father !

ANTONIO.

I'm weary —
Yes, I will rest until thy mother comes.

GIOVANNI.

Yes, father, sleep ! and I will watch by thee.
[*He sits by his father ; after a pause.*
My father sleeps ! What has he on his head ?
Ha ! a crown, a laurel crown. Mine also
Shall he have — that, when he wakes, he will be
Pleased — my mother also.

[*He weaves the crown of forget-me-nots with the laurel. Baptista enters with his son Franz from the wood.*]

BAPTISTA.

Art certain the picture that saved thy life,
A little painting was — about this size ?

FRANZ.

Indeed ! I know it well ! St. Magdalena.
Lovely, most lovely, is the painting !

BAPTISTA.

With long golden hair, her dress, celestial
Blue ; a death's head, and a great book ?

FRANZ.

Most certain ! 't was by Antonio.

[He points to the chapel.]

BAPTISTA. *[astonished.]*

And it has saved thy life ! While I — I have —
No, that's not done.

FRANZ. *[observing Antonio.]*

Who lies upon the earth,
All pale and bleeding ? a child sits by him.

BAPTISTA.

Where, where ?

FRANZ.

He lies just here !

BAPTISTA. *[crosses himself.]*

Jesu Marie !

FRANZ.

You're pale, my father.

BAPTISTA. *[trembling.]*

Seest thou the corpse ?

FRANZ.

Let us go nearer.

BAPTISTA. [*holding him back.*

Madman ! thou ravest !

Seest not the angel near the body.

FRANZ.

A little child.

[*Giovanni motions to them with the Agnus Dei not to come nearer.*]

BAPTISTA.

Madman ! seest thou not the Agnus Dei ?

'T is John, the apostle of the wilderness,
Sits by the body.

FRANZ.

Father, what's come o'er you ?

BAPTISTA.

Not even hope ! See there, he threatens again !

FRANZ.

You are confused.

BAPTISTA.

Let us return, 't is late ;

The evening air, so cold, freezes my heart !
Go home, I say ! Speak not of this ! 't is fever
Only. If, in my dreams, I sometimes speak
Of murder, assassination ! take no
Account — they are empty words.

FRANZ.

My father !

BAPTISTA.

[*angrily.*

'T was but an accident ; I tell thee so —
That in the moment I would murder *him*
He saved thy life !

FRANZ.

My father ! murder ?

BAPTISTA.

He threats again. Come, let us fly. [*they go off.*
[*Silvestro and Marie enter.*]

MARIE.

O, my Antonio ! art thou still there ?

GIOVANNI.

He sleeps, dear mother ! hush ! my father sleeps.

MARIE.

[sees that Antonio is dead.]

He is gone ! my life 's gone with him !

GIOVANNI.

Mother !

Why weep'st thou ? my father sleeps, is weary.
O, let him rest ; he will soon rise again.

MARIE.

[takes Giovanni in her arms and kisses him.]

Thou angel, my only one, my comfort,
Antonio's son !

SILVESTRO.

Marie ! mother ! moderate thy grief —
Fright not the boy — he thinks his father sleeps.

MARIE.

O, blessed, soothing faith ! I'll trust it too !
Yes, yes, he sleeps ! Heaven speaks to me
From out those innocent lips. Soon, soon we'll
Sleep, and wake in heaven, together.

[Marie sits by the fountain and weeps. Little Giovanni sits calmly by his father's body. Silvestro stands quietly observing them. A messenger enters and speaks to Silvestro, who stands between him and the body of Correggio.]

MESSENGER.

To Correggio, does this road lead ?

SILVESTRO.

Yes.

MESSENGER.

Know you Allegri, Antonio Allegri,
Brother woodsman ?

SILVESTRO.

Yes. For him what hast thou ?

MESSENGER.

A gospel ! his fortune 's made !

SILVESTRO.

Yes, his true
Fortune ! his bliss, his honor, is immortal !

MESSENGER.

What ! you know already ?

SILVESTRO.

What do I know ?

MESSENGER.

Our gracious duke — the duke of Mantua,

Him to his court invites, in his good service
Always to remain. There shall Antonio
Be loved and honored — richly rewarded !
Julio Romano and Buonarotti,
Him, have so greatly praised, that on the spur
His royal highness sent me forth, him, and
His wife and child, to bring to Mantua.

SILVESTRO.

Too late thou comest, although so speedy !

MESSENGER.

How so ?

SILVESTRO.

There lies the martyr, already gone :
The burthen of necessity too heavily
Upon him weighed. That *was* Allegri !
Years shall come and vanish, e'er our
World again can say, there *is* Allegri !

MESSENGER.

Ah, I believe you !

SILVESTRO.

Bear greetings to thy
Duke ! tell him humane he was, that through
Advice of two world-famed professors,

He was moved to shelter one fair flower
In his parterre. Say also, nobler it
Had been, had he himself recognized
The noble genius of the gifted man ;
Himself raised up and cherished worth,
That accident revealed, alas ! too late !
And fate too soon has snatched away !

MESSENGER.

The noble artist, to die in want !

SILVESTRO.

Profane him not with pity !
The GLORIFIED ! His weary head has sunk
Indeed, but the crown of genius — the
Immortal crown, wreathing his temples
Pale in death — I say to thee, shall dazzle
Worlds, when golden crowns have perished !

GIOVANNI. *[begins to weep.]*

My father sleeps not ; he is dead ! is dead !

SILVESTRO.

Thou hast the right to weep, my child ! and thou,
Marie, weep thou with me — no right to murmur
Has the world ! for in his works alone, his fame,
Of genius the immortal gift, will live

Eternally ! To us he dies ! to us
A husband, father, friend ! To us the world
Cannot restore him ! *There* first in heaven
Our souls again will find Allegri !

THE END.

SAPPHO.

PERSONS.

SAPPHO.

PHAON.

EUCHARIS, }
MELITTA, } *servants of Sappho.*

RHAMNES, *a slave.*

A COUNTRYMAN.

MAIDENS, SERVANTS, COUNTRY PEOPLE.

SAPPHO :

A TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An extensive plain. The sea forms the background, now crimsoned by the dawn. The shore, level in part, rises upon the left, into rocky precipices. Near these, upon the shore, stands a white marble altar to the goddess Aphrodite. Upon the right of the fore-ground is the entrance to a grotto, wreathed with ivy and other climbing plants ; beyond which a marble colonnade, with steps, forms the entrance to Sappho's dwelling. On the left, rose-trees, thickly laden with roses, overhang a bank of green turf. Flutes and timbrels, and a confused sound of voices and jubilee are heard in the distance.

Rhamnes comes from the palace of Sappho.

RHAMNES.

Awake! from sleep awake! She comes! she comes!

O that my wishes winged were, and bore

My aged feet, my beating heart, to hers!

Up, idle maidens! why do you delay!

It suits you not — for youth is ever active!

[*Eucharis, Melitta and the other maidens of Sappho's household enter.*]

MELITTA.

Why scold you thus? here are we all assembled!

RHAMNES.

Behold! she comes!

MELITTA.

Ye gods! who comes?

RHAMNES.

Sappho

Draws near.

[*Shouts from within.*]

Hail! Sappho, hail! queen of our hearts!

RHAMNES.

[*from within.*]

Brave people, it is well! Hail! Sappho, hail!

MELITTA. [*coming forward.*

What means this joy?

RHAMNES.

Now, by the gods, you ask!

Thus coolly asks, the maiden! Sappho returns!
Bearing the crown from high Olympus! There
Has she gained the wreath of victory!
In sight of all assembled Greece, to her
Was given the glorious prize, the prize
Of poesy; therefore, the people hasten,
And joyously they send upon their wings,
Their jubilee's broad wings, the name of her,
Whose glory is their honor.

This was the hand,
And these the lips, that first unlocked the sounds,
And taught her youth the language of the lyre!
Taught her the freedom of her muse to bind
In bonds of flowery sweetness!

THE PEOPLE. [*from without.*

Hail! Sappho!

RHAMNES. [*to Melitta.*

How they rejoice! See you the crown?

MELITTA.

Sappho

Alone I see. Let us to meet her there!

RHAMNES.

Remain, remain ! What signifies your joy ?
Her ears have heard sweeter applause than thine.
Prepare the dwelling for her gracious use.
By serving only, honors her the slave !

MELITTA. *[after a pause.*

Ah ! at her side ! behold !

RHAMNES.

What dost thou see ?

MELITTA.

A shining form stands by her side ! Ah, thus
They paint Apollo, god of the bow and lyre.

RHAMNES.

I see ! but go not yet.

MELITTA.

Ah, why delay ?

RHAMNES.

Your duty, know you not, lies in your home ;
Within the house expands the truest joy.
To greet the loved one with loud jubilee,
Belongs to us, while quietly the slave
Toils in her home.

MELITTA. *[impatiently.*

Now, let us go.

RHAMNES.

Not yet —

[after a pause.

Now forth ! now forth !

[The female attendants rush out.]

Now, they may forth. Their joy,
Their childish joy, disturbs, not now the love,
The general jubilee of love !

[Sappho, splendidly dressed, approaches upon an open car drawn by white horses. She holds the golden lyre in her hand, and wears upon her head the crown of victory. Phaon, in the simple dress of a shepherd, stands by her side. The people surround, and press upon her with loud cries of joy.]

THE PEOPLE. *[shouting.*

Hail ! Sappho, hail !

RHAMNES.

[mingling with the people.

Hail ! Sappho, dearest, hail !

SAPPHO.

Thanks ! friends ; my countrymen, my thanks !
Now first

This crown is dear. The laurel wreath adorns
 The citizen, but presses hard the poet's
 Temples. *Here* first 'tis *mine* ; here is its home ;
Here, where awoke the dreaming youth of song,
 Where first the muse breathed on my lyre, and joy
 Inspired, entranced, and filled my raptured soul —
 Here, where the cypresses around, whisper
 Their spirits' greeting to the child, from out
 The parents' grave — here, where their early
 glance

Dwelt first with looks of love upon the strivings
 Of the muse, and blest its faintest efforts.
 My countrymen ! my *deeds* have crowned your
 care,
 And in your circle, in the midst of love,
This crown is earned ! Here first the wreath
 Of glory is no crime !

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

Happy are we !
 We call your glory ours ! We feel and prize
 From you each faithful, truthful word !
 More than assembled Greece, we prize your fame !

RHAMNES.

[*the old steward presses through the crowd.*
 Sappho beloved ! welcome, my queen ! my
 Sappho !

SAPPHO.

[Descends from the car and welcomes with warmth all those who are near.]

My faithful Rhamnes, welcome ! Antander,
Thou also here ? spite of thy age's weakness !
Calista, Rhodope ! dearest, you weep !
The eye pays richly, like the heart. Your tears !
Behold ! they draw forth mine ! O be they spared !

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

Thrice welcome, Sappho, to thy ancient home !
Thrice welcome to the circle of thy friends !

SAPPHO.

Ah, not in vain you greet your citizen !
She brings you one who merits *all* ! Phaon
May boldly stand among the most renowned.
Although his years are few, and yet adorned
With graceful youth he stands, his words and
deeds
Have long been ranked with boldest manhood !
Your contests — should they need the hero's
sword,
The lip of eloquence, the poet's fire,
The friend's wise counsel, the protector's arm —
Then call for him, and seek no further aid.

PHAON. [embarrassed.]

Thou sportest, Sappho ! a youth, obscure,
Unknown, unsought, can I deserve so rich
Reward ? Who will believe thy praise ?

SAPPHO.

Who e'er
Beholds thy blushes, Phaon ! My praises
Will be truth to them.

PHAON.

O'erwhelmed with shame
I'm silent and amazed !

SAPPHO.

Assure thyself —
Howe'er thy heart disowns, silence and worth
Are sister virtues ever.

[*To her countrymen.*]

Hear me, my friends !
Phaon's rich gifts, with gentle winning power,
Were formed to charm my soul, and from the
misty
Pinnacles of fame to draw my wishes down,
Down to the blooming vale of life ! Phaon !
I love him ! he is my choice ! at his side,
Willingly I change the laurel for the

Myrtle crown, and lead with you a simple life —
A shepherd's life ; asking the meed alone
Of still domestic joys, to wake my lyre,
That hitherto with love and glory rang.
From it, my friends, you now shall learn to love !
Alone, to love !

THE PEOPLE.

The gods reward thee, Sappho !
Hail ! Sappho, hail !

SAPPHO.

It is enough, my friends !
Have Sappho's thanks ! Follow my servants ;
Refreshed with food and wine, the joyous dance
Shall fill the measure of our jubilee,
And celebrate the union of our friends.

[*To the country people who greet her as they go out.*]

Farewell ! and thou ! and thou ! to all, farewell !
[*Sappho and Phaon alone.*]

SAPPHO.

Behold, my friend ! thus lives thy Sappho ; thus,
For deeds of love, for friendship, gratitude — thus
Ever has been the measure of my life.
I was at peace, and now am deeply blest.
Bereavement and ill-fortune I have felt !

Early the tomb closed o'er my parents' dust.
 My brethren's faithful heart, their adverse fate
 And self-inflicted wounds, to Acheron
 Impelled too early.

Too soon I learned
 The burning pain, ingratitude inflicts
 Upon the trusting heart ; the bitter wound
 Of falsehood ; friendship's and love's illusions ;
 The broken arrow ; — these have I known ; but
one,

My Phaon, could I not survive ! Of thee —
 Thy love and friendship robbed, Sappho must die ;
 Therefore, beloved, thyself examine ; [love,
 Prove thy own heart. Thou canst not know the
 The depth, the infinite of love, that fills
This heart. O leave me never ! Let me not learn
 This full and beating heart that leans on thine,
 Can find it empty.

PHAON.

Exalted woman !

SAPPHO.

Not so ! Whispers thy heart no softer name ?

PHAON.

Of what I speak, or how, I scarcely know.
 From out my lowly life a beam of light

Has raised, and on the dazzling summit placed,
Where my vain wishes fruitless led. This joy,
Almost unhop'd, in rapture I am lost.
The woods, the shores, fly swiftly from me !
The mountain heights, the lowly cabins, vanish !
Scarcely I feel that the firm ground is here !
That I alone am borne on fortune's car.

SAPPHO.

Sweetly thou flatterest, love ! yet thou flatterest !

PHAON.

And Sappho art thou ! Apollo's darling !
That from the farthest strand of Pelops' Isle,
To where the full-lifed Hellas knits itself
With the rough Thracian hills ; in every isle
That Chronos' hand flung in the Grecian sea ;
In Asia's rich transparent skies ; in every clime
Where Grecian lips the language singing speaks —
The language of the gods ! there Sappho's
fame

Rises in anthems to the listening stars !
Sappho ! how fell thine eye upon a youth,
Lowly, obscure, unknown to fame ? Himself
Revering the glory only of the lyre,
Because thy hand had touched it.

SAPPHO.

Not so —

Apollo's lyre ! The ill-stringed lyre !

Repeats it then alone its *mistress'* praise ?

PHAON.

Ah, since that hour, this trembling hand essayed
Itself, to touch the consecrated strings,
Thy image, goddess-like, arose before me !
When in the quiet circle of my brethren,
(And in their midst the shepherd fathers sat ;)
Théone, my good sister, from her store
Sought out a song of thine ; the sacred roll
Containing Sappho's songs ; hushed were the
tongues
Of the loud youths ; the maidens prest together,
No kernel of the golden words to lose.
She read the songs of godlike youths aloud ;
Of Aphrodite, the love inspired ! the dirge
Of lonely, wakeful nights ; of Andromida's,
And of Athe's sports. Suspended every breath,
And the high bosom swelled with joy, and all
Disturbing sounds were in deep silence hushed.
Then laid the silent Théone the roll
Aside ; musing she sat, resting her head
And looking pale, in the uncertain darkness
Of our hut. "How may the *goddess* look," she
said ;

“Methinks, I see her now ! By all the gods !
Among a thousand, I should know her well !”
Then were all tongues unloosed, and each upon
Imagination drawing, gave thee new charms !
Minerva’s eye, and Juno’s form, and Venus’
Charmed girdle ! I only, I stood silent
And went out. There, in the sacred stillness
Of solitary night, where nature’s pulses
Through their enchanted circles slumbered,
I spread my arms to thee ! There in the midst
Of the blue vault, the zephyr’s breath, the moon’s
Pale silver light, the mountain perfumes, blent
In one pervading sense of rapture, then,
Sappho, wert thou mine ; I felt thee near me ;
Thy image floated in the perfumed air ——

SAPPHO.

Forbear ! with thine own riches thou array’st me !
Never ! alas ! resume the borrowed charms !

PHAON.

Sent by my sire to high Olympus’ games,
The chariot and the race’s contest,
On the whole way ’t was borne along that thou —
That Sappho’s lyre the poet’s crown would win.
Impatient longings seized upon my heart ;
The way half won, my courser sank o’erspent.
Still I prest on —

The chariot's flying course ;
The wrestler's art ; the discus' joyful shout
Touched not my thirsting sense. I asked not
Who had reached the highest place ? the prize,
By whom 't was won ? " I shall see her," I said,
" Sappho ! the woman crowned ! " Now came
the day,

The contests of the muse ! Alcæus sang
In vain for me — Anácreon also !
The band that held my senses closed, for them
To unbind 't was vain.
Then came the murmurs of the people loud.
Listen ! the multitude divide. Behold,
Amid the waving crowds, appeared a goddess,
Bearing a golden lyre upon her hand.
Her tunic of pure white, flowing below,
Concealed her ankles. Of palm and laurel
wrought,

The embroidered leaves were twined, showing
The poet's meed and his reward. Unbound,
The purple mantle floated the lovely form
Around, like the resplendent clouds of morn,
Veiling the sun.
Above her hair, dark as the raven's wing,
Rested the diadem, like the pale moon
Upon the brow of night, a silver crest. [thou ! "
A voice spake in my throbbing heart, "'t was
Before I gave it sound, the jubilee

Deep, thousand-voiced, the people's jubilee,
Proclaimed thy name !

Sappho ! how thou sang'st,
Surpassing all beside, and Sappho's lyre,
The hand that held it, consecrating ! alas !
I cannot tell. The timid, unknown youth,
Struck by thy glance, rushed through the multi-
tudes,

And at thy side stood shame-o'erwhelmed.

Sappho !

How much was real, how much I only dreamed,
Thou ! only thou, canst tell."

SAPPHO.

Ah; well I know !

Thou stood, the whole of life burning within
Thy eyes, that, scarcely raised, revealed beneath
The enkindled flame. *Thee* I called ; and
Thou, o'erwhelmed with joy and timid doubt,
Followed, uncertain, trusting in thy fate.

PHAON.

Ah ! who would trust, who could believe that
Hellas'

Noblest muse, on Hellas' lowliest son would look ?

SAPPHO.

Forbear ! To fate, and to thyself unjust,

Despise not thou the gifts, th' impartial gods,
At every birth shower on the child —
On cheek and brow, filling the soul with joy.
Beauty's a precious gift ; courage and power
Are gifts divine, securing this life's good ;
The sister fair of poesy, imagination,
Thus adorns of life the roughest paths, its
Highest aim is to live happy here ! Ah,
Not in vain the muse herself has sought
The bare, unfruitful laurel ; perfumeless,
It presses on the brow ; the heart, repaying
But in vain, the sacrifice it asks from her,
Who, standing on the heights of fame, spreads out
Her arms, to ask from life its overflow of love.

PHAON.

Lovely enchantress ! whate'er thou say'st bears
From thy lips the pledge of truth.

SAPPHO.

My friend !

Let us both crowns about our brows entwine.
From art's intoxicating cup but sparingly sip,
And drink from life the sweetest draught of love.
Behold these shores, environed half with land,
And half-embraced by ocean's stormy arms ;
A simple charm reigns o'er the place. Within
These shades of roses, and these pillared halls,

Beneath these grottos — Here will we dwell,
 And, like the immortals, live. Whate'er is mine
 Is also thine ! the highest joy, that thou
 Wilt first possess the good. Look upon all —
 'T is thine ! Thou standest in thy own estate !
 My servants will regard thee as their Lord,
 Their service will they learn from me ! Maidens !
 And slaves ! come near !

[*Eucharis, Melitta and Rhamnes enter, with
 other servants and slaves.*]

RHAMNES.

Called you, my mistress ?

SAPPHO.

Yes, draw near. Here, you behold your master.

RHAMNES.

[*much wounded, and half aloud.*]

Master ?

SAPPHO.

[*with imperious gesture and feeling.*]

[*then more gently.*]

Who spoke ? What wouldst thou say, my friend ?

RHAMNES.

[*retreating.*]

Nothing !

SAPPHO.

Say nothing then ! you see your lord !
 Whatever his desires may be, obedience
 Demand, not less than mine. Alas ! for him
 Whose disobedience on this brow, traces
 A cloud. Faults to myself, I may forgive,
 Never offence to him. [to Phaon.

Trust thyself to them,
 Phaon ; heavy upon thee lies the weight
 Of this day's journey ; of hospitality
 Enjoy the sacred right, Sappho's first gift.

PHAON.

O, could I from me throw my lowly life,
 As I my soiled dress exchange for new !
 Freedom of thought with recollection win,
 And be what I desire. Farewell !

SAPPHO.

I wait thee here.
 Farewell ! Remain, Melitta ! [Phaon goes out.

Sappho. Melitta.

SAPPHO.

[after remaining silent a long time.
 Now, my Melitta !

MELITTA.

What ? O my mistress ! what is your wish ?

SAPPHO.

Rushes the blood alone in my warm breast,
And ice in every other frozen heart ?
She saw him, heard his voice ; the air that fanned
His brow was breathed by her — and the first
sound

She utters is, “ Your pleasure, mistress.” Go !
Almost could I despise thee, my Melitta !

[Melitta goes out silently. Sappho throws herself upon the green bank, after a while calling Melitta back.]

Know'st thou thy friend so little, my Melitta ?
Couldst thou of gratulation nothing say ?
You saw him ! heard him ! Saw you then nothing
Worthy of remark ? Maiden ! where were thy
eyes ?

MELITTA.

Thou knowest full well what thou hast said, that in
The stranger's presence the maiden should be
Modest ; her glances should restrain.

SAPPHO.

*[kissing her.**And thou,*

Poor, lonely child, cast down thy eyes. For thee
The lesson was not meant, but for thy elders.

[*Sappho looks penetratingly at her.*]

Yet stay — once more — Since I have left thy side,
How hast thou altered !

No longer as a child,
But as a maiden fair, I see thee. Ah !
Dear child, thou art right. The lesson reaches
thee !

[*Sappho rises to go, but turns to Melitta.*]

Wherefore so silent and so timid now ?
Thou wert not so before. Why dost thou tremble ?
Sappho, the friend, not now the mistress, speaks ;
The pride, the scorn, the sense of power,
And all that in thy friend was wrong, is past ;
Not with her have returned her faults ; sunk,
As she passed the bosom of the flood, below
Its stormy surface. The breath of love, that,
Like the golden beam of evening, turns
The thunder cloud to gold, within my heart,
Has all it touched, ennobled. O, pardon
The rash reproof, the bitter word, that killed
Like the sword's point. Like sisters will we live,
Divided only by my love to Phaon —
In all things else, alike. I will be good —
Pious and good.

MELITTA.

That wert thou always.

SAPPHO.

What they *call* good — alas ! not bad ! but ah !
Too ill and poor my life, for such a high
Reward ! Believest thou, Melitta, he will
Be happy ?

MELITTA.

Who then 's not happy with thy love ?

SAPPHO.

What can I offer from my dearth ? Phaon !
There in the fulness of his youth he stands,
With all life's fairest blossoms on his head.
Expands he but his wings, and, like the bird
Of Jove, he 's lifted to the sun. All
That is beautiful, and great, and high is his.
The world's subdued by power.

And I !

O give me back, ye gods ! my vanished youth !
Extinguish in this breast the stamp of years,
And all of sorrow's deeply-woven trace.
The memory of all I've done and felt,
And suffered here — O, let it be as though
It ne'er had been ! Let time return to that

Sweet age, the round and blooming cheek of
youth,

When undefined, the sense of a new world
Opened around me. Anticipation then,
And not the memory of pain, played
Tremblingly within the lyre, and moved
Its golden strings. Ah, then an unknown land,
Enchanting, strange, the magic land of hope,
Allured my steps, and in my numbers sang.

*[She reclines on the bosom of Melitta, and is
silent.]*

MELITTA.

[alarmed.]

Sappho, thou art ill ! Thou faintest, Sappho !

SAPPHO.

I stand upon the margin of a cliff,
Wide gaping between him and me, and see
The land beyond, waving with golden grain !
My eyes can reach it — my weary footsteps,
Never !

Alas for her, whom glory's empty
Shadow from the low circle of her home
Allures. Her fragile bark is shipped alone,
Upon a wild and stormy sea of waves.
There spreads no tree ; no leaf nor flower there
blooms

Upon the gray, immeasured space. The coast

Looms cheerful on her sight. The voice she loves
 In faintest echoes meets her ear ! wearied
 She turns and seeks her home. Traces of love
 So lightly left are lost. Spring is no more !
 And ah ! no flower is there !

[She looks with melancholy at her crown.

The dry

And faded leaf alone !

MELITTA.

The lovely crown !

The glorious wreath ! sought by the God-inspired !
 And by so many lost !

SAPPHO.

Lost ? 'T is true !

Melitta, thou speak'st truth ; by thousands sought,
 And won by few. Ah, let not her who craves,
 Reproach its power. It is no empty
 Sound. Its touch imparts the power of gods !
 I'm not so poor in gifts. His wealth, with wealth
 Of mind, to meet the gifts of beauty and
 Of youth, I'll hold in this fair wreath. Herein
 Shall blend the future and the past.

You gaze,

Melitta, and understand me not. Seek not
 To learn, nor understand !

MELITTA.

Art thou then vexed ?

SAPPHO.

Not with thee ! with thee, not, dearest child ! Go,
And say, I'll meet them here.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*A small open plain near the grotto, surrounded
with rose-trees. Phaon comes in alone.*

PHAON.

Here, quiet dwells. The guest's wild joy is still ;
The cymbals' noise, the flutes so wildly gay,
The sound of unchecked mirth, reaches not here.
These trees so softly whispering to the heart,
Invite its fevered pulses to repose.
How has my being changed ! the tenor
Of my life how altered, since that fair morn
I left my parent's home, borne swiftly on
By winged courser to Olympian heights !
In cheerful thoughts, e'er then, could I unfold
The tangled thread of sensitive desire,

And clear as light it lay before me. Now,
Like a sultry summer's night, emotions,
Sweet and painful, mingling in misty doubt,
Lie like a cloud upon me. A heavy veil
Covers the past. The thoughts of yesterday
I scarcely can recall — the present
From the past divide. "Were it myself," I ask,
"That by her side, at fair Olympus stood,
Shared in her triumph? as an equal shared?
My name in chorus did the people shout?
Mingling with hers." Ah, was it thus? Scarcely
Can I believe. Ah, what a wretch is man,
That which, as hope inspired, fulfilled, lulls him
To sleep.

When fancy's slight-sketched image
Painted her form upon the floating mist,
Incited by a passing word, a glance
Of love, how easy had it been of life
The precious gift to cast away! And now —
Now, she is mine, and only mine! Now that
My wishes like the winter chrysalis
Expand, and all the golden butterflies
About me play, I question, pause, and tremble
To advance! Ah, I forget myself, my home,
My parents — all! my parents? must I now first
Remember you? alas! could I so long
Forget? No word, no sign — perhaps my death
You weep! perhaps the hundred tongues of fame

Already tell that he, your son, Phaon,
 To you so dear — him to Olympus sent,
 The prize to win. In Sappho's arms —
To scorn her,
 Who shall dare? The ornament of women!
 Who dare at her the poisoned arrow aim?
 For her, against the world I'll stand. For her,
 My father's anger I can brave. Saw he
 Her now — the ancient, pious, disesteem
 He felt at female poets, he'd lay aside.
 Even him her lute would charm —

[Phaon remains sunk in thought, and hears approaching footsteps.]

Who comes? The noise
 Draws near! How retreat? where hide?
Ah here!

[He goes into the grotto.]

SCENE II.

Eucharis, Melitta, and female slaves, with flowers and wreaths.

EUCCHARIS.

Haste, maidens, haste! Gather more flowers!
 Bring heaps of flowers. Adorn the porticos,
 The hall, the court, the vestibule and doors!

E'en the parterre wreathe high with flowers.
To leaf and bud add the imperial rose,
To celebrate the feast of love, Sappho
Prepares for Phaon !

MAIDENS.

[displaying their flowers.

Behold ! behold !

*[They begin to hang the pillars of the porticos,
and the trees around, with wreaths of roses, and
chains of flowers.]*

EUCHARIS.

Ah, well ! right well ! And thou, Melitta !
Where, maiden, thy flowers ?

MELITTA.

[showing her empty hands.

Ah, where ?

EUCHARIS.

Melitta ! thine ! thou comest with empty hands.

MELITTA.

Spare me ! I'll fetch them.

EUCHARIS.

She moves not — dreamer !
And yet will bring them ! Thou little muser,

What has come o'er thee ? At the feast, to-day,
 Sappho, so often smiling, looked at thee,
 And then cast down her eyes. Blushing, confused,
 You trembled, and forgot the fair routine.
 And when the wine cup to present she called,
 And e'er it touched the stranger's lip, to thine
 Was pressed ; then cried she out, " the eyes cast
 down."

Melitta trembled, and half the contents
 Of the wreathed cup were on the marble poured.
 Then, even Sappho smiled. The cause, ah, tell us.
 Lies will not help.

MELITTA.

Spare me !

EUCHARIS.

A little tear

Comes there to help. Poor thing ! I'll say no
 more.

Yet do not weep. I cannot chide, so often
 Are you good, Melitta ! Your flowers are those !
 Come, I'll bring more. Stay here, and help to
 weave

The roses and their buds ; but listen, child ! weep
 not !

[*Eucharis and the maidens go out.*]

SCENE III.

Melitta alone. She sits upon the turf seat, and begins to form a wreath. After a few moments, she lays it by her side, and leans sorrowfully on her hand.

MELITTA.

I can no more ! Alas, my head will burst !
Wildly my heart struggles within my breast.
Here must I sit, deserted and alone
In a strange land, far from my parents' hearth.
These hands, in vain, bound with the slave-wove
chain,

I open to my own ; implore in vain !
Ah ! no one listens, no one heeds my tears !
Children and friends, I see prest heart to heart ;
For me none beats. The loved ? they dwell far
off !

Children I see, climbing the father's knee,
The pious brow and sacred locks to kiss.
Mine dwells far from me, o'er the desert sea !
Where no caress from his loved child can greet
Him more. They use me well, and fail not
Gentle words — alas, not love — pity alone
Vouchsafes the slave kind words. The flatt'ring
lips

Too soon are filled with scorn and bitter jests.

[*She kneels.*]

Ye gods ! who oft have heard, when piously
I've turned beseechingly to you, and with
Rich hand have crowned my wishes. Listen
Once more, and turn a gracious ear ! conduct
Me to my own ! Let this hot brow, stricken
With grief, rest once again upon the tender
Breast of love. Ah ! lead me to my own, or
Take me — take me to yourselves !

SCENE IV.

Phaon, who, while Melitta was thus complaining, stood at the entrance of the grotto, comes forward and lays his hand gently upon her shoulder.

PHAON.

So young, and yet so sad ? Maiden, so sad !

MELITTA.

[*much frightened, draws herself together.*]

Ah !

PHAON.

For a friend's breast, I heard thee ask the gods.
A friend is here ! Sorrow unites as well as love ;
The wide world o'er, are brethren those that
mourn.

I also weep my parents. The Heimweh
 Of the heart impels me to them. Our griefs
 Let us confide, that each may be a balsam
 For the other. Thou art silent. Wherefore?
 Why art thou trustless? Look at me, my child!
 Not ill are my intentions.

[*He raises her head upon his hand.*

Ah! I see —

Thou art indeed the little Hebe, the floor,
 The polished floor, refreshing, not the guest.
 But why so timid? the accident, so
 Innocent, the guest had charmed — the mistress
 Also.

[*At the last word, Melitta blushes deeply, rises
 her eyes and looks at Phaon, and then rises to go.*]

Offend thee, would I not, my lovely child!
 Thy gentle eye, so earnest and so sad,
 I marked it at the feast. (Do not mistake.)
 Throughout the noisy joy, it, virgin pure,
 Shone with a quiet, patient, tender light.
 Who art thou? and what keeps thee here? serving
 I saw thee. The domestic slaves
 Called thee, companion!

MELITTA.

[*turns away and would go.*

That I am — I am —

PHAON. [*holding her back.*

Not yet !

MELITTA.

What wouldst thou of the slave, my lord ?
Let a slave seek her !

[*tears stifling her voice.*
And ye gods ! *me* to yourselves !

PHAON. [*caressingly.*

Compose thyself ! thou tremblest ! thou art moved !
The slavish chain binds but the hands ! the soul
Of servant and of lord are free and equal.
Be calm ! Sappho is good and mild. A word
From me, and, without ransom, thou art free !
Restored to friends and home — thy father's joy !

[*Melitta sorrowfully shakes her head.*]

Believe me, it is certain. But how soon
Has that deep longing vanished — that home-
sickness
For thy father-land, that seized thee first !

MELITTA.

Where is my father-land ? Ah, tell me that !

PHAON.

Know'st thou it not ?

MELITTA.

In tender childhood's days,
 From its protecting shelter was I torn —
 Within my memory dwells its flowers, its fields,
 But not its name. Beneath the sun it lay;
 For there 't was always light, and warm, and fair.

PHAON.

And lies it far from hence ?

MELITTA.

Far, very far !
 Foliage of other trees o'ershadowed me,
 And different flowers perfumed the air ;
 In the blue vault shone lovelier stars ; good,
 Friendly men there dwelt, and fairer children.
 Ah ! and a good old man, with silver locks,
 Caressed me. I called him father. Another —
 O, so beautiful and bold — with eyes and hair
 So brown — indeed — like thine —

PHAON.

Thou'rt silent — He ?

MELITTA.

He also —

PHAON. [*seizing her hand.*

Caressed thee ? is it not so ?

MELITTA.

[*softly.*]

I was a child !

PHAON.

I know it well — a sweet,
Unconscious, lovely child ? Now further on.

MELITTA.

Thus all went fair and well with me. One night
A loud shriek pierced my ear. Frightened, I
woke !

On every side, they called. Alone, my nurse,
My faithful nurse, bore me alone, far out
In the wild night. The flames I saw devour
Our cabins ; saw wild, fighting men ; around,
Our neighbors fleeing and falling ! Now drew
near

A tyrant, and stretched out his hand for me.
Amid wild shrieks, sorrow and battle cries,
I found myself upon the vessel's deck,
That, arrow-swift, through the dark water glided.
Maidens and children round about me wept —
As we receded from our native land,
By one and one, the number always lessening.
Days and nights, even whole moons, we sailed ;
At last I was alone. Of all, remained
I only, by the wild men stolen. We neared,

At length, the strand of Lesbos — touched the
land,
And Sappho saw the child — she proffered gold.
Melitta is her slave.

PHAON.

In Sappho's hands
Is then thy lot so heavy ?

MELITTA.

No. Friendly
And kind she took me to her heart. My eyes
Forgot to weep, my little heart to sigh.
Sappho with love sheltered and cared for me.
For she is good, though often rash and bitter.
Sappho is violent, though kind and good.

PHAON.

And yet thy home thou canst not yet forget.

MELITTA.

Ah, all too soon the memory goes. The dance,
The childish play, and household cares, efface
The early image of my childhood's home.
When grief and sorrow press, comes the sharp
pain,
And memory, with trembling hand, withdraws

The shadowy veil from the long past. And thus
To-day my heart was heavy, and every
Lightly spoken word pierced like an arrow.
But now, I'm well and happy.

[*The maidens call, "Melitta."*]

PHAON.

Hark ! they call !

MELITTA.

I go — they call.

[*She gathers up her flowers and wreath.*]

PHAON. [*taking the flowers.*]

What hast thou here ?

MELITTA.

Roses.

PHAON.

For whom are they ?

MELITTA.

For thee ! for thee and Sappho.

PHAON.

Remain !

MELITTA.

They call ! farewell !

PHAON.

Thus shalt thou not —
In sorrow thus depart. Show me thy flowers.

PHAON.

[selects a rose and places it in her bosom.

This rose shall be the witness of this hour.

Remember, not alone in thy own home,

But in the stranger's land, are friends !

[Melitta, agitated by his emotion, stands with her arms hanging motionless, her head sunk, and eyes fixed on Phaon, who has removed some steps, and is looking intently at her. They call from within, "Melitta."]

MELITTA.

[to Phaon.

Me, didst thou call ?

PHAON.

I called not. 'T was within.

MELITTA.

[gathering up her flowers.

I come.

PHAON.

So avaricious art thou, then ?
Deserve I not a gift, *one* in return ?

MELITTA.

A gift ! what, then, have I to give ?

PHAON.

The vain,
The proud give gold. Friendship and love bestow
Their all. A flower — *here* thou hast flowers.

MELITTA.

[throwing him her flowers.]
How *these* ? that every wild girl plucks ! for thee !
No, never !

PHAON.

What else ?

MELITTA.

So plundered are the stems,
There is no trace of flowers.

[she tries to reach the high branches.]

There hangs, indeed,
A rose on that high twig — but all too high —
I cannot reach it.

PHAON.

I'll raise thee to it.

MELITTA.

Ah, not so.

PHAON.

Why not? I'll not resign my will!

MELITTA.

[Steps upon the bank to reach the rose, hanging too high.]

Now come — the twig I'll bend to thee.

PHAON.

That's right.

MELITTA.

[Standing on tiptoe, bends down the twig, upon which hangs a splendid rose.]

Canst reach it?

PHAON.

[without regarding the rose, looks at Melitta.

Not yet.

MELITTA.

Alas! I slip — I fall —

[*The branch springs upward, and Melitta, frightened, sinks into Phaon's arms.*]

PHAON.

No ; I'll support thee !

MELITTA.

Ah, leave me ! go !

PHAON.

[*holding her.*

Melitta !

MELITTA.

Ah, leave me ! go !

PHAON.

[*pressing a kiss upon her lips.*

Melitta !

[*Sappho, simply dressed, and without crown or lyre, enters.*]

SAPPHO.

My friend, I seek thee ! Ha ! what do I see ?

MELITTA.

Listen ! the mistress !

PHAON.

How! Sappho! Thou art here!
[*He releases Melitta from his arms; a silence.*]

SAPPHO.

Melitta!

MELITTA.

Madam!

SAPPHO.

What seekst thou here?

MELITTA.

Flowers!

SAPPHO.

And not without good fortune ——

MELITTA.

Ah! the roses!

SAPPHO.

They blush upon thy lips!

MELITTA.

They hang too high ——

SAPPHO.

Perhaps, not high enough !

Go !

MELITTA.

Madam ! shall I — go ?

SAPPHO.

Go ! *only* go ![*Melitta goes.*]SAPPHO. [*after a long pause.*]

Phaon !

PHAON.

Sappho !

SAPPHO.

Phaon ! you went too soon.
Your absence marred our festival of joy.

PHAON.

The wine-cup love I not — nor yet loud joy.

SAPPHO.

Not loud — that were indeed reproach !

PHAON.

How so ?

SAPPHO.

If it displeased thee thus — the festival
Of my return — I've erred indeed !

PHAON.

Thus

Sappho to wound, was far from my intent.

SAPPHO.

In its wild joy the heart demands the sound
Of jubilee ; while blest within itself
It dwells, all undisturbed, and seeks alone
The solitude of joy.

PHAON.

Just so !

SAPPHO.

To our

Good friends, my gratitude for all their love
Was due. Wine, as thou know'st, imparts to
them

Its joy. No feast in future shall disturb
Our peace ; I love them less than thou !

PHAON.

Sappho !

I thank thee !

[*He appears as though going.*

SAPPHO.

Thou wouldst go ?

PHAON.

That I remain,

Wouldst thou ?

SAPPHO.

To go or to remain, thou'rt free !

PHAON.

Sappho ! thou'rt angry.

SAPPHO.

[much moved.]

Phaon !

PHAON.

Sappho !

Wouldst thou —— ?

SAPPHO.

Nothing ! yet something — I would say.

[She appears calm.]

I saw thee, with Melitta — sporting.

PHAON.

Melitta ! who ? Ah yes ! go on ! Melitta ——

SAPPHO.

She is a lovely child.

PHAON.

O yes! go on!

SAPPHO.

The dearest, might I call her, of my slaves.
Yes, of my children — for, as a child,
I love her. That yet the chain of slavery
Is unloosed, her orphanhood forbids. Nature
Denied to her the love of home and kindred;
Not yet her feeble youth can stand alone,
Unsheltered by maternal love and care.
In Mytilene's best ranks, (this is my charge)
My maidens dwell, and all their happiness
Ascribe to Sappho's care.

PHAON.

[*musings*.

Most beautiful!

SAPPHO.

Of all the maidens, a capricious fate
Has led to Sappho, none are more cherished
Than my Melitta, the little maiden
With the quiet mien. With moderate gifts
And uninspired for highest art, she yet
Is dearer than the rest. Most innocent

And unassuming, her deep and heartfelt love,
That, wounded, like the garden chrysalis,
Draws back, and trembles at the slightest touch ;
Yet, where it fastens, dies !

PHAON.

Beautiful ! go on !

Most beautiful !

SAPPHO.

I would not, pardon,
My friend, I would not that a passing joke,
An unreflective word, wishes or hopes
In this pure breast awake, that, unfulfilled,
Martyr the soul. This gentle heart I'd spare
That longing which consumes its life — and that
Rejected love that like the worm preys — my
friend !

PHAON.

What saidst thou, Sappho ?

SAPPHO.

You do not listen.

PHAON.

Yes — I hear — the love that torments —

SAPPHO.

It does
Indeed — but now you are not well — again
The subject we'll resume.

PHAON.

Ah, yes — another time.

SAPPHO.

For this, farewell ! This was the hour in Sappho's
Early days, sacred to meditation ; now
I do not hope to find the muse in that
Still grotto. But yet, the hour is calm, and
Quiet soothes the soul. Meantime, farewell !

PHAON.

Thou also — wouldst thou leave me ?

SAPPHO.

Wouldst thou
I stay ?

PHAON.

Farewell !

[*Sappho turns quickly from him, and goes into the grotto. Phaon after a long pause, and looking immovably on the ground.*]

And art thou really ——

[*looking around.*

Indeed ! she's gone. I am confused — my head
Is hot and heavy. Ah, here she sat —

[*He throws himself on the bank.*

That lovely, blooming child ! here will I rest,
Here shall my weary heart find peace.

[*He reclines with his head on the turf-bank.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*Same as the former. Phaon lies slumbering
upon the turf. Sappho enters from the grotto.*

SAPPHO.

It is in vain ! my thoughts rove far from home,
But come, unlike the bee, all empty back.
Whate'er I do, whate'er I only think,
Ever before me dwells that hateful scene.
Ah, should I flee beyond the limits of this earth,
Where, on my eye more lovely colors rise,
Still is it there ! his arms around her thrown,
His lips upon hers prest ! I will not think !
Am I not frantic, mad ? thus to torment

My soul, and to bewail what may not be ! [tion,
Who knows ? some fleeting mood, passing emo-
Some evanescent wish, that fled as soon
As formed, lured him an instant to her arms.
Alas ! the measure of his love cannot
Be found in this unfathomed breast ! In man's
Unstable mind, changing with change, subjected
To its laws !

With joyful step, he enters free
The open path of life, all flooded with [sword,
The morning glow of hope. With shield and
Courage and faith, prepared to strive and win
Of bright success the crown. For his wild wish
And restless hope, the quiet inner life
Of love is all too narrow. Love, indeed,
An humble flower, blooms at his feet. He bends
To pluck the lovely thing — places all cold
And bears aloft the trophy in his helm.
He never knows the deep and sacred flame
That dwells in woman's breast. Her all of life —
Her wishes and her hopes centre and dwell
There only, like the young bird fluttering
Around the mother's nest — its cradle and
Its grave ! Her whole of life, a diamond rare
She hangs upon the fate of her all newly
Risen love !

He loves ! in his wide breast is room
Enough for many loves. What women deem

A grievous fault, with levity he acts ;
 And if he meet a kiss from other lips,
 Deems it his right to take. Ah, it is so !
 Alas ——

[She turns and perceives Phaon sleeping.]

But see ! there in the rose-tree's shade
 He sleeps — the too dear traitor — there he sleeps,
 And rest, and quiet, soothing cheerfulness
 Have settled tenderly upon his brow.
 Thus breathes in gentle slumber — innocence ;
 Thus rises gently the unsullied breast.
 Dearest ! thy slumber I'll believe, whate'er
 Thy waking moments may disclose. Pardon,
 Beloved ! if the first moment of surprise
 Thy honor wounded. If I could suspect
 Falsehood its foul admission e'er could find
 In that pure temple. He smiles, his lips are
 Parted — a name seems hovering there. Awake !
 And call thy Sappho, who stands near !

[She presses a kiss upon his brow.]

PHAON.

[Awakes, opens his arms, and, with eyes half closed, calls out.]

Melitta !

SAPPHO.

[steps back, surprised and shocked.]

Ha !

PHAON.

Ah, who has waked me ? who, envious,
Has scared away the image of my dream ?
Sappho ! thou here ? I knew it well — thy form,
The prototype, stood at my side ; and thus
The dreaming image was so beautiful !
Thou art distressed ! what has disturbed thee ?
say.

Ah, I am free and joyous. The burthen
That o'erweighed this anxious breast is gone ;
Most wondrously it sank away ; I breathe
Again, free and unfettered. The cheerful,
Golden sunlight, the caressing air, the sound
Of happy voices, that only fluttered
O'er my senses, are now most welcome.
I feel inspired with joy — most happy — blest —
And only wish more senses — to enjoy ——

SAPPHO.

[lost in thought, speaks low to herself.

Melitta !

PHAON.

Dearest ! be happy ! cheerful
And happy. 'Tis here so beautiful ! ah,
So heavenly fair ! With weary pinion
Sinks the summer eve, so tenderly, so soft,
Upon the quiet sea. The sea, love-thirsting,

Gently swells to meet the bridal of the
God of day. A low breath whispers tremblingly
Within the slender pine, that bends caressing
To the virgin rose, soft greeting her with love.
Sappho ! we love !

SAPPHO.

This injured breast again
He'd fill ! Too deeply I have read his heart !

PHAON.

The feverish joy, that many weary days
Consumed my life, has fled — I now am calm ;
Believe me, Sappho ! so truly good as now
I've rarely been. Let us be gay — cheerful
And calmly gay. But say of dreams — think'st
thou ?

SAPPHO.

Dreams lie ! and liars are my hatred.

PHAON.

Listen ! I had e'en now, as here I slept,
A dream both wonderful and strange. I was
Exactly as before on high Olympus ;
I saw thee in the contest, as before,
Secure the highest prize. In the loud cry,
The noise and rush of chariots and men,

A silver sound was heard, and all was hushed.
 Thou sang of love's pure joys, and I—I
 To my inmost heart was moved. I fell
 Before thee! and thou, thou canst remember!
 Again; a change came o'er my dream. Thee
 I perceived no longer—yet there—there stood
 The lovely form. Around the shoulders flowed
 The purple robe; the lyre was in her hand;
 The face alone was changed, as 't were a mist,
 Like that that floats upon the mountain top.
 The laurel crown had vanished—vanished
 With that deep sadness on thy brow. The lips,
 So tuneful with the songs of gods, now smiled
 A lovely, joy-inspiring smile. Thy face,
 Stolen from Minerva, changed of itself—
 A child's was there—in short, it was thyself,
 And not thyself—Sappho sometimes, and then—
 Again——

SAPPHO. [almost shrieking.

Melitta!

PHAON. [much alarmed.

Who told thee that—that
 It was her! myself—I scarcely knew it!
 But thou art moved—and I——

[Sappho motions with her hand for him to leave her.]

PHAON.

How ! shall I go ?

[Sappho again signs him to leave her.]

Thou wilt not hear me, Sappho ! Shall I go ?

[Sappho makes no answer. He goes.]

SCENE II.

SAPPHO.

*[alone.]**[after a long pause.]*

The quiver sounded !

[pressing both hands on her breast.]

Here is the arrow !

Who can doubt longer ? O 't is clear, 't is clear.

She dwells within his oath-forgetting heart ;

She hovers o'er his shame-forgetting brow.

In sleep his dreams put on her form. He dreams

The false one near — and Sappho for her slave

Is scorned. Sappho ! by Heaven ! for whom ?

Am I no longer Sappho ? no longer her

Who at her feet saw kneeling heroes, kings —

And playing with their proffered crowns, proudly

She looked at them, and heard, and left them all !

Am I the same, that with loud jubilee,

Was greeted as its jewel, by assembled Greece ?

Why did I rush from that high place, gained

By the laurel, down to the narrow vale,

Where poverty, and crime and treachery dwell ?
My place was there on high — there on the clouds ;
Here is no place for me ! none but the grave !
When gods descend to earth, they mingle not
With men. The immortal and the human
In the same cup never unite. One, one
Only must thou choose ; and hast thou chosen ?
There 's no return for thee ! The golden fruit
Of fame, once tasted, like the fatal seed
Of death, from life forever draws thee —
From the quiet shades where humble pleasures
Dwell. No, never more may life, however dear,
Allure thee there, with flattering sounds of joy.
Friendship nor love no more can bless ! forbear !
Unfortunate, forbear ! Roses, wouldst thou
pluck ?

The thorn, e'en now, is in thy breast !

I 'll see,

I 'll look upon these charms, victorious
O'er Sappho's wealth of mind. Do I then dream ?
For when I ask, a timid child, unformed,
With downcast eyes seeking the ground ; with lips,
Whose only sounds are childish lisplings ! Thus
She comes before me ; the love of play, the
Fear alone of anger, moving her soul.
How ! did my eyes alone o'erlook the charms
That move his inmost being ? Melitta !
Yes, her I will see. Melitta, come !

SCENE III.

Eucharis. Sappho.

EUCARIS.

Did Sappho call ?

SAPPHO.

I called Melitta ;
The child, where is she ?

EUCARIS.

Where ? Within her room.

SAPPHO.

She seeks then solitude ! What does she there ?

EUCARIS.

I know not. Strange is her being, wayward
And strange through the whole day. This morn-
ing
Was she quiet, but still in tears. This eve,
Laden with napkins, to the limpid brook,
That through the myrtle grove impetuous
Rushes, she hastened on. Anxious to learn
What there she sought, I followed after.
I found her there —

SAPPHO.

With him ?

EUPHARIS. [*much surprised.*

With whom ?

SAPPHO.

Go on !

EUPHARIS.

In the clear brook I found her standing, bent,
Her tunic high tucked up, (she feared no spy,)
With little hands the water lading, and
Showering both arms and face. The sun beams
Through the myrtle leaves — the glow of haste
Had shed a lovely rose-tint o'er her form.
A nymph of Dian, as she stood — ah yes,
The youngest of her train she seemed.

SAPPHO.

Not praise,
But knowledge did I seek.

EUPHARIS.

When now the bath
And its long labors o'er, and breast and cheek
All dry, she hastened singing to the house,
In thought so deeply lost, that the green twigs

To frighten her I threw, she heeded not,
 But closed her chamber; and what there she did
 I know not. I heard her, seeking her robes,
 And singing cheerful songs between.

SAPPHO.

She sings,

And Sappho — no, *she* does not weep. Bring her
 To me.

EUCHARIS.

Melitta?

SAPPHO.

Yes; who else? Ah!
 A sweet name! an ear-enchanting name!
 Melitta! Sappho! Go! bring her to me.

SCENE IV.

*Sappho alone. She sits upon the turf seat, and
 rests her head upon her hand.*

SAPPHO.

No! 'tis in vain — alas! I call on pride —
 Love answers in its stead.

*[She sinks back in reverie. Melitta enters,
 simply but carefully dressed. A rose is on her*

bosom, and roses in her hair. She pauses at the entrance, but as Sappho does not move, she comes nearer.]

MELITTA.

Sappho! I'm here!

[Sappho turns quickly her head, and shuddering draws back.]

SAPPHO. *[to herself.*

Ah! beautiful! Ah, gods,

She's beautiful!

[She conceals her face with both hands. A pause.

MELITTA.

Sappho! me didst thou call?

SAPPHO.

How carefully adorned! False as she is,
To meet the false one! How hard to check this
Inward anger, or to conceal my fears!

[to Melitta.

What feast to-day demands this festal dress?

MELITTA.

A festival?

SAPPHO.

Why wear this dress and flowers?

MELITTA.

Sappho ! you've blamed me oft — the ornaments
So rarely worn, presented by your love.
But gala-days, so niggardly, they come ;
I've spared them all — the jewels rare — but now
To-day I said, " So joyful 't is to-day,
Myself more gaily I'll adorn."

SAPPHO.

A joyful day ? indeed I know not why ?

MELITTA.

[turned —
Why ? Because — ah — that thou art back re-
That thou — indeed, I know not why I'm glad.

SAPPHO.

Ah, false ! she's false !

MELITTA.

Say'st thou ?

SAPPHO.

[controlling her emotion.

Melitta, come —

We will speak frankly with each other now.
How old art thou ?

MELITTA.

Alas, thou knowest, Sappho !

Of my infancy, the melancholy tale.
No mother counted carefully the suns
That on my birthday shone. Yet I believe
I number sixteen years.

SAPPHO.

No ! thou liest !

MELITTA.

Sappho ! I ?

SAPPHO.

Dost thou speak truth ?

MELITTA.

Sappho ! I do !

SAPPHO.

To-day, you scarcely count your fifteenth year.

MELITTA.

It may be so.

SAPPHO.

So green in years, so ripe
In art — it cannot be ; not thus does nature
Counterfeit her work. No ! I'll believe it not.
Melitta — here — rememberest thou the day,

Now thirteen years, thou first saw'st Sappho ?
Wild men, sea pirates, brought thee to my door.
You wept ; deep sobs convulsed your little breast.
I pitied you, the orphan, homeless child ;
Your tears besought me, and I paid the price.
Myself almost a child, I pressed thee warm
Upon my heart. They would divide us, but
Thy little arms, linking about my neck,
Thou slept, consoled ! Rememberest thou that
day ?

MELITTA.

Ah, can its memory ever pass away ?

SAPPHO.

Soon after this, the fever's serpent wiles,
Breath-poisoning, upon thee seized. Melitta !
Whose was the breast that through the weary night
Pillowed thy head, all self-forgetting ? Death
Robbing of its prey, tearing the loved one
From his giant grasp.

MELITTA.

Sappho ! it was thou !
What have I, then — what am I, that to thee
And to thy goodness, I owe not ?

SAPPHO. [*drawing her to her.*]

Not so !

Here on my heart ! here is thy place. Ah, well
I know, thou wouldst not of thyself, not
With thy will, betray thy Sappho. Together,
Once again, our hearts shall beat together.
Our eyes, in sister eyes once more shall look ;
The truthful words out of true hearts shall breathe
Again ; the same true heart, the faithful ear,
(The separate sounds having one echo,) [part.
Scarcely can know from which true breast they

MELITTA.

Sappho !

SAPPHO.

Yes, I am right. Thee I may trust !
Is 't true ? Thou wouldst not, no ! thou could'st
not —

MELITTA.

O Sappho ! what ?

SAPPHO.

Thou knowest, Melitta ! Go,
Lay off this vain and idle dress. Not thus
I love to see thee. Put on a simple robe ;
These varied dyes offend the classic taste.
Melitta should be simply clad. Simplicity
Becomes her best, and modesty's her native garb.

Go — another dress — I say — remain !
 Hold, I say.

Where wouldst thou go ? Remain !
 Look in my eyes. Why are thy own cast down,
 Seeking the ground ? Ah ! not thus, not timid
 Wert thou when Phaon —

Ha ! now thou art red !
 Traitor ! thou art thyself betrayed ! Deny
 Thou canst not. Not the false tongue, the crim-
 soned

Cheek's the witness of thy guilt ; it burns and
 Pales, obedient to the traitor heart.
 Unfortunate ! 't was this, that at the feast
 So strangely moved, that I for timid
 Innocence mistook. A snare it proved, that
 Like the crafty spider's web enclosed its prey.
 So young, and yet so artful ! so seeming fair,
 With poison in thy heart. Do words then fail ?
 Wilt answer not ?

MELITTA.

I know not what thou mean'st.

SAPPHO.

[grief.

Not ? and tears ? Tears are the sacred right of
 Answer with words, although from truth divorced.
 Of innocence the silent signs will not
 Avail, while bride-like and seductively
 Adorned. Take off the flowers. Scarcely

They serve to hide the serpent folds beneath.
Take off the wreath.

[*Melitta silently removes the wreath from her head.*]

SAPPHO,

Give me the crown ! In memory of thy truth
I'll keep the withered leaves. Faded, alas !
Like Sappho's hope, Melitta's gratitude !
Why sparest thou the rose upon thy breast ?
Lay it away.

[*Melitta steps back.*]

Is it a love pledge ? speak !

[*Melitta crosses her arms upon her breast concealing the rose.*]

In vain you strive ! The rose, I say.

MELITTA.

Never !

My life — rather my life !

SAPPHO. [*drawing her dagger.*]

Ungrateful slave !

Thy life is mine ! Give me the rose.

MELITTA. [*falling on her knees.*]

Ye gods !

Oh ! then protect the orphan ! ye high gods !

PHAON.

[enters.

Who calls? Melitta, thou! a dagger! drawn!

[a pause.

What's here? thou, Sappho, here!

SAPPHO.

Ask of the rest.

PHAON.

Melitta! what?

MELITTA.

The fault alone is mine.

The slave's obedience I refused.

SAPPHO.

Forbear!

Load not thy soul with false deserts. Heavy,
Too heavy, lie the true upon thee. *[To herself.*

Alas!

Does Sappho need the falsehood of her slave?

*[aloud to Phaon.*The rose, I ordered from her breast removed;
And she to obey my will, refused.

PHAON.

And she was right. By all the gods, she's right.
No right hast thou to rob her of the flower.

I gave it for remembrance, a token sweet,
 Of a too happy hour ; of my esteem,
 A sign ; a proof that not in every breast
 Compassion is extinguished, misfortune
 Is forgot ; a drop of honey on the cup
 By stranger's pride prest to her lips ; a pledge
 Of my deep, inward faith, that innocence
 Is woman's fairest crown — more prized
 The humble wreath of love, than glory's
 Laurel crown. She weeps — weep not, Melitta !
[*To Sappho.*

When slavery was bought, the price of tears
 Thou didst not pay. The body only
 Canst thou slay ; no right hast thou to cause a
 tear.
[*To Melitta.*

Look not beseechingly at me ! thy eyes
 So mildly pleading for the pitiless.
 Compassion ! thou know'st her not.
 Is not the dagger glancing from her hand ?
 Two others hidden by the sunken lids
 Will pierce thee deeper still.

[*He takes up the dagger that Sappho had suffered
 to fall from her hand.*]

This steel — I'll bear it here, on my warm heart,
 By her betrayed ! and when, in coming time,
 I dwell with sad and tender grief on what

She was, one glance upon this steel my soul
Shall heal.

SAPPHO.

[raises her eyes and looks at him.]

Phaon !

PHAON.

O listen not ! the tears
Are false ; they lure thee to the dagger's point !

SAPPHO. *[still looking at him.]*

Phaon !

PHAON.

Look not at her ! False as her hand,
Her eye, will kill.

MELITTA.

She weeps !

PHAON.

Weeping, she weaves
New charms. Go forth !

MELITTA.

Shall I thus suffering,
Leave her ?

PHAON.

Me, will her tears infect ! haste forth
Before her serpent charms enfold us both.

[He leads Melitta forth.]

MELITTA.

[returning.]

Ah no ! I'll leave her not. Sappho !

SAPPHO. *[with stifled voice.]*

Call'st thou,

Melitta ?

MELITTA.

[rushes to her, and embraces her knees.]

Sappho ! the rose ! my life ! take it ! take both !
Where is thy dagger ?

PHAON.

*[Hastens after, seizes the rose with both hands,
and draws Melitta away.]*

'T is thine ! 't is thine ! no god
Shall rob thee of it. Come quickly ! hasten
From her presence forth !

*[He leads Melitta off. Sappho stretches out her
arms to them, and then falls fainting back.]*

The curtain falls.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The same open green near the grotto and the temple. Moonlight.

SAPPHO.

[enters, sunk in deep thought : after a pause.

Am I still here ? Does the firm earth remain ?
This living empire ! In that fearful hour
Fell it not all in fragments ? The brooding
Darkness that surrounds me ! Is it the night,
And not the grave ? They say a monstrous pain
Will kill. It is not so, for Sappho lives !
How still is all around ! the air is mute !
Life's various tones are hushed ! echoes
No sound from out the unstirred leaves !
And solitary, like a homeless child,
My weeping voice goes wandering through the
night.
Ah ! could I sleep ! sleep like the birds so gently
Rocked, without alarm or fear, so safely
Cradled, lulled in a deep slumber, where
All — all sleeps, and even the pulse is still,
No fearful morning beam waking to pain.
No ingrate —

Ah, hold ! touch not the serpent !

[*With stifled voice.*]

Murder 's a crime, and robbery, and lust,
The horrid brood of hydra-headed sin,
That from the deep abyss of flaming hell
Infect this world with poison-breathing breath.
Yet one I know, a crime, whose deadly stain
To lily fairness turns the others white.
Its name, ingratitude. Alone, it does
What all the others only singly do —
It robs, it lies, deceives ; it swears false oaths,
Betrays and murders. Ah ! ingratitude !
Ingratitude, ingratitude !

Protect

Me ! O ye gods ! Protect me from myself !
Him, only him from destiny I prayed ;
Alone, selected him alone, from all
That pressed with homage at my feet. Him
Only on the summit would I place
Above the grave and death. On glory's wings
I'd borne him on to glory's deathless fame !
All crowns would I have wound around his head,
And asked one word alone from him. And he —
Do you then live ? immortal gods !

[*After a pause, Sappho seems struck with a new thought.*]

Ye live !

From you the thought that lightened through my
soul :

Let me it seize — that passing thought so fleet.

To Chios, say'st thou ? shall Melitta go ?

To Chios, there, divided from her crime,

Love's fault, love's torments shall atone.

Rhamnes !

Thus let it be. Rhamnes ! In vain I call.

Immortal gods ! I thank thee for the thought.

Soon shall it be fulfilled !

RHAMNES.

[*enters.*

You called. I wait. What wouldst thou, Sappho ?

SAPPHO.

[*without observing Rhamnes.*

She is my work ! without me, what were she ?

What can deprive the builder of his right

That to destroy, himself has formed, his own ?

Destroy ! can Sappho do it ? Ah, her hope —

It stands too firm for my weak hand. To Chios

Should he follow, led by his love, more blest

Her fate amid the herd of slaves, than I —

Than Sappho in her golden, empty house.

How sweet it is to suffer for the loved,

When memory and hope, twin roses rare,

Together on one stem unite ! O, then
The thorn's unknown ! O banish me, ye gods !
Far in the sea's remotest isle, upon a rock
Washed by the surf, with only clouds and sky
 above,
My only friendly neighbors, from the paths
Of living men shut out. O then erase
From out the book of memory, the last few hours.
Alone — leave me alone, my faith in his
True love, and I will bless my fate. Ah !
Solitude is not where memory dwells !
At every thorn that pierced my naked foot,
At every want and loss of ease, I'd think,
“ What would he give to spare and save me pain.”
A balsam, cooling, poured o'er every wound.

RHAMNES.

Sappho ! you called.

SAPPHO.

O Phaon, Phaon !
What had I done ? I stood so calm, alone,
With poet's lyre, upon the poet's open
Height, and saw beneath of life the joys and pains
That reached me not. Of flowers alone
Was wreathed the poet's crown. The silent
 hours

I counted not. Freely I gave my song ;
It gave me back content, and ever-living
Youth to crown my head.

Then, the traitor came.

With hasty hand he rent the golden veil
Of trust, and drew me to the weary desert
Down, where no footstep echoes, and no path
Expands. Within that desert space, his hand
Alone was near ; that he withdrew, and fled !

RHAMNES.

Sappho ! why alone the desert night thus
Wander ? The ocean's chill betrays thy trust.

SAPPHO.

Betrays ! Rhamnes ! dost thou know a crime
So black and heavy as ingratitude ?

RHAMNES.

Alas, not one !

SAPPHO.

More vilely venomous ?

RHAMNES.

Truly, I do not.

SAPPHO.

Worthy of curses
And of punishment!

RHAMNES.

In truth, it merits
Every curse.

SAPPHO.

O, true, most true ! open and bold
Are other vices. Hyenas, lions, tigers,
Wolves ! a serpent is ingratitude, so
Fair and crafty, so beautiful and smooth,
The poisonous serpent ! O, so fair !

RHAMNES.

Come in. Within thou art better. With care
And love thy dwelling is adorned ; and Phaon
Waits thee in the hall.

SAPPHO.

How ! Phaon waits — for me ?

RHAMNES.

Yes ; I saw him musing and reflecting,
Walking to and fro ; sometimes he rested

Motionless ! spake softly to himself ; then
Hastened to the window, and sent his sighs,
Thee seeking through the night.

SAPPHO.

He waits
For me, for Sappho waits ! Did he say that ?

RHAMNES.

He said not that, but still he waits ; for whom
Should Phaon wait, if not for Sappho ?

SAPPHO.

For whom ?
For whom ? Not for thy Sappho, Rhamnes. Yet
Shall he wait in vain. Rhamnes !

RHAMNES.

Sappho ! ah !

SAPPHO.

Thou know'st at Chios dwells my father's friend,
E'er long a guest of mine.

RHAMNES.

I know it well.

SAPPHO.

Loose quick the boat from the near shore. It
rocks
So idly in the brook. This night thou must
To Chios.

RHAMNES.

Alone ?

SAPPHO.

No, no ! [a pause.

RHAMNES.

Who then will
With me there ?

SAPPHO.

What didst thou say ?

RHAMNES.

To Chios,
Who goes with me there ?

SAPPHO.

[leads Rharnes to the other side of the stage.

Prudent and quiet
Must thou be. Attend ! to Melitta's room
Proceed, and say, "that Sappho calls, she must
Obey ;" but softly, that he hear her not.

RHAMNES.

Who ?

SAPPHO.

Phaon ! yet should he follow thee —
[*She holds in.*

RHAMNES.

What then ?

SAPPHO.

Bring her with force, or mildness bring ;
But softly, to the unmoored boat, and on
To Chios. Go instantly !

RHAMNES.

And, when there ?

SAPPHO.

There give her to my friend. For Sappho's love
He will protect her slave. Severe — no, not
Severe his treatment be. Ah ! the very act
Of banishment is punishment enough.
Rhamnes ! dost hear ?

RHAMNES.

I'm gone already.

SAPPHO.

Delay not ! hasten !

RHAMNES.

Sappho ! farewell !

Before the morning dawns, I'm far from hence.

SAPPHO.

[alone.

He goes ! — yet, no, I'll call him back ! Custom's
A weary thing. It fetters us to that
We hate.

[She is lost in thought.

Listen ! a footstep ! no, the wind
Stirred through the leaves. How beats my heart
Within my storm-moved breast, as if it were
A guilty thing. Voices ! hark ! she comes ! she
Follows willingly. She dreams not 't is the last !
I will — I cannot see her. I must flee !

[Sappho goes quickly off.

MELITTA.

Here, saidst thou, Sappho waited ! She's not
here !

RHAMNES.

[looks round embarrassed.

Not here ? come on — not there ? yet was she here
A moment since. Come on !

MELITTA.

On where ?

RHAMNES.

She may, indeed, be at the sea ;
 She 's wandered forth there to the brook.

MELITTA.

There goes

She never.

RHAMNES.

Perhaps to-night —

MELITTA.

And why to-night ?

RHAMNES.

And — why ? Ei ? Because even now she gave
 The order thee to bring —

[aside, embarrassed.

What shall I say ?

MELITTA.

Rhamnes ! you are to-night so strange ! Why
 turn

Your eyes embarrassed from my glance ? tell me
 Where Sappho waits, that I may seek her will ;
 But know'st thou not — so, let me then depart.

RHAMNES.

Hold!

Thou darest not go.

MELITTA.

Why not?

RHAMNES.

Thou must with me.

MELITTA.

With thee! and where?

RHAMNES.

Come to the boat. Thou'lt know.

MELITTA.

Ye gods! what is it then?

RHAMNES.

Come, maiden, come;

The hour is pressing — midnight is well past.

Forth must we now.

MELITTA.

What wouldst thou do? Go forth
To-night upon the great, far-lying deep?

RHAMNES.

Be tranquil, child ! 'T is not so far — Chios
Is not so far.

MELITTA.

To Chios ! never !

RHAMNES.

Thou must
Indeed ! So Sappho orders.

MELITTA.

Sappho ! say'st
Thou ? Go ! I will to her — yes at her feet :
She'll hear and judge.

RHAMNES.

[holds her.]

Stir not ! not from this spot !

MELITTA.

How, Rhamnes ! thou !

RHAMNES.

Eh then ! what can I do ?
Thus ordered Sappho : Rhamnes must obey !

MELITTA.

O let me move thee thus ! Here will I kneel

Before thee, Rhamnes ! Listen to my prayer.
And is there none, none that will lend an ear ?

RHAMNES.

In vain you call. Come on !

MELITTA.

Never ! never !

Will no one pity ?

PHAON.

[*rushes in.*

Melitta's voice I hear !

Audacious man ! dar'st thou thy hand 'gainst her
To raise ?

[*Rhamnes leaves Melitta loose.*]

My fears deceived me not, when wolf-like
Thou, spying around, crept near her chamber-
door.

Grim wolf ! the shepherd watched to save the
lamb.

RHAMNES.

Sir, I follow but the orders I receive.

PHAON.

How ! Sappho's orders ? Sappho ordered this ?

Sappho ! Sappho ! I know thee now too well,
 And yet, alas ! too late. Wherefore too late ?
 There yet is time the bondage to throw off
 That binds us both. By Heaven ! I will !

[*To Rhamnes.*

Wherefore, thou all too ready minister
 Of crime ! wherefore ——

Melitta ! thou art pale !

MELITTA.

O, I am well.

PHAON.

Go, slave ! and thank the gods
 No ready stone came to my hand ! By Heaven !
 For every tear, a death-pang shouldst thou pay.

[*To Melitta.*

Thou art weary. Lean upon me ; firmer
 Support thou 'lt never find.

[*To Rhamnes.*

Look at her, slave !

Look at the lovely child. This, of the gods
 The fairest work, thou 'd injure.

RHAMNES.

Injure !

The gods forbid !

PHAON.

What then ?

RHAMNES.

Only — but pardon —

What I would do I cannot now betray.

Suffer me then to go.

PHAON.

By all the gods !

Until I know the measure of your crime,

From hence you stir not.

RHAMNES.

Melitta must with me —

PHAON.

Where ?

RHAMNES.

That is my mistress' secret. 'T is safe
Within her servant's breast, and goes not forth.

PHAON. [*draws the dagger.*

I thank thee, Sappho ! this point shall draw it
forth.

Against thyself thou hast furnished arms.

MELITTA.

Spare him ! To Chios were his orders.

PHAON.

Chios !

MELITTA.

Yes ; there dwells a friend of Sappho's. Melitta
There would be well cared for.

PHAON.

'T is o'er the sea !

MELITTA.

A boat rocks in the brook.

PHAON.

A boat, saidst thou ?

MELITTA.

Is 't not, my father, so ?

RHAMNES.

Call me not father,
Ingrate ! Sappho's betrayer !

PHAON.

A boat ! a boat !

Ye gods ! the sign from you I take. From you
 It comes. The truth, too late I understood !
 Melitta only — she, or none else bears
 In her breast the second half of this, that
 Longing beats in mine. Yourselves, ye gods !
 You point the way that I will follow. Melitta !
 Yes, to Chios thou shalt go ; but not alone.
 With me, safe at my side.

MELITTA.

With him ? with him ?

PHAON.

Yes, we will leave this hostile land. Envy
 And hate — revenge, with its Medusa head,
 Follows thy steps, its death-snare spreads. Come,
 The boat is there, courage and strength are here,
 To shield thee 'gainst the world.

[He takes her in his arms.]

MELITTA.

[anxiously to Rhamnes.]

Rhamnes !

RHAMNES.

[to Phaon.]

Reflect,

Bold man !

PHAON.

Think of thyself. Within my hand
Rests thy vile life.

RHAMNES.

Sir, she is Sappho's slave.

PHAON.

Liar ! she is mine ! dear as my life. [*To Melitta.*
Come !

Melitta, follow thou !

RHAMNES.

The dwellers here,
Within this land, honor our Sappho's, like
A crowned head. Ready they are to rise
At the first call, her rights to guard ; in arms
Her threshold to protect. A word from me,
And hundreds rush together.

PHAON.

I thank thee,
Slave ; almost I had forgot with whom,
And where I am. Thou goest with me.

RHAMNES.

I — go —

PHAON.

Yes, thou! but only to the boat. Sappho
I envy not such slaves as thou. When once
Secure, thou may'st turn back and tell. Enough!
Thou goest ——

RHAMNES.

Never!

PHAON. [*drawing the dagger.*

I have, I think, that
Will enforce thy duty.

[*Rhamnes retreats, and Phaon follows with the dagger.*]

MELITTA.

[*following.*

Phaon! forbear!

RHAMNES.

[*has drawn himself far back to the other side.*

Alas for age, that has the will, but not
The power to act.

PHAON. [*draws near Melitta.*

Now, maiden! come! away!

MELITTA.

Ah! where?

PHAON.

On to the boat.

MELITTA.

*[Turns from him, hastening to the fore-ground,
and kneels.]*

Ye gods! ah, shall I?

PHAON.

Come! the wide, protecting distance calls!
Her arms expands and opens to thee — invites
Beyond the old gray sea, where dwells sweet
peace,
Security and love. Under the broad,
Deep roof, formed by the linden boughs, that
Shelter still the parent's home, Melitta!
Dearest, there vaults the temple of our love!
There — thou tremblest, bride! O tremble not,
betrothed!
Thy bridegroom's hand holds thine, embraced.
O come!
And wilt thou not? By all the gods this hand
Shall bear thee hence; and on, and on, forth,
Even to the ends of this wide earth.

MELITTA.

Phaon!

PHAON.

Come ! the stars shine friendly down. Gently
The sea swells up to meet the breeze, and
Amphitrite is love itself.

RHAMNES.

Sir, 't will cost thy life.
[*They all go out.*

EUCCHARIS.

[*appears on the steps.*

Methinks I hear his voice — no, none is here !
Over this house bad spirits seem to rule ;
No joy is here, Sappho's return to greet.
Anxious and timid all the people are.
I seek Melitta, and find her chamber void.
Our Sappho wanders, plaintive and alone,
Through the mirk night.

'T is Rhamnes' voice ! hush ! listen !

RHAMNES.

[*at a distance.*

I call for help. Ho ! Sappho's slaves !

EUCCHARIS.

He calls !
He's wholly breathless ! Rhamnes, what's hap-
pened ?

RHAMNES.

[*hastily.*]

Up! up from your idle beds, good friends!
The fugitives pursue! your help I ask!

EUCCHARIS.

What's happened?

RHAMNES.

Ask not! Call Sappho and her slaves!

EUCCHARIS.

But wherefore?

RHAMNES.

There is no time for words. Hasten!
Awake the house! hasten and save! I can
No more. Betrayer! slave! exult not yet!
The pious gods, the ocean deities—
They will revenge the rash, unworthy crime.

[*Many of the people with Sappho's servants enter.*]

The people call! haste quickly to the shore!
Shout loud the cry, the help-beseeching cry!
Ask not for what, but let the tocsin sound.

SAPPHO.

[*enters to the former.*]

What frightful noise disturbs the quiet night,

And frights the weary sleep-destroyer, grief,
From her sad office? Who can complain near
Sappho's deeper pain?

RHAMNES.

I, O my mistress!

SAPPHO.

Thou, Rhamnes! here! Where is Melitta!

RHAMNES.

Gone forth!

SAPPHO.

Gone forth! and thou yet here!

RHAMNES.

Escaped!

SAPPHO.

Forbear!

RHAMNES.

Escaped with Phaon! My arm, and
My weak age he overpowered — fled with
His booty o'er the waves; and the same boat,
Our captive boat, now bears them both away.

SAPPHO.

Rhamnes, thou liest !

RHAMNES.

Would that I did ! would that
This time I lied !

SAPPHO.

O where remain your
Lightnings, O ye gods ? For Sappho's heart
Alone, have ye reserved your curse ? Deaf is
Your ear, and lame the vengeful arm ? Send down
The thunder crash, the lightning's piercing shaft ;
Crush the betrayer's head, as ye have crushed
The heart of Sappho.

In vain ; no arrow swift
The air divides. The wind wooes lovingly
The bending leaves ; the sea bears swiftly on —
On its broad breast the freight of love, and rocks
The boat to its far shore.

There is no help !

Sappho herself shall aid.

[*The plain becomes gradually filled with slaves
bearing torches, and with crowds of country people.*]

Ah friends ! my thanks ! you're true ! I thank
your love.

Go ! go, my countrymen ! and what the gods

Your Sappho now deny, your arms procure.
 If ever ye have held her dear, revenge
 Her now ; now is the time to prove your love.

[*Sappho goes round addressing many of them.*]

Thou, Myron, oft hast sworn ; and thou, Ter-
 pander ;

Think of our hymns, O Pheres, Lychas thou !
 And thou, Zenarchos ! All, all are my friends !
 Haste to the strand ! there man the boats, and
 follow,

Swift-winged, follow the betrayer's bark.
 Think, that I wait, in torments here alone ;
 That every hour a hundred daggers pierce,
 Till your return, this grief-torn breast. Who brings
 Him back, whoe'er the joy creates that in
 His eyes I look, and ask, " What have I done
 That thou shouldst kill me thus ? "

[*She bursts into tears.*]

Not that, not that !

Revenge alone ! who brings me that shall have
 My gold, my life ! Upon the winds, swiftly
 Upon the rushing winds, go forth !

A COUNTRYMAN.

Without him

We return not back !

SAPPHO.

I thank you, friends !
Within your hands my life I lay. O may
My wishes give you wings, and my revenge
Nerve every arm ! Haste only ! only hasten !

*[The people and servants go off. Sappho presses
both hands upon her heart.]*

They're gone ! now I am well ! now will I rest !

EUCCHARIS.

Sappho, you tremble !

RHAMNES.

Sappho, ah, you fail.

SAPPHO.

[sinks back into the arms of Eucharis.
O let me die ! Why hold me from the grave ?
The curtain falls.

ACT V.

Scene, the same. The day breaking with the beautiful crimson suffusion described in the beginning of the first act. Sappho is half lying upon the turf-bank, supported by Eucharis. In the distance are many servants watching.

Rhamnes comes forward, and Eucharis places her finger on her lips in sign of silence.

EUCCHARIS.

Still, O still !

RHAMNES.

She sleeps ?

EUCCHARIS.

Her eyes are open.
The body wakes, the spirit seems to sleep.
Thus has she lain three hours, thus motionless.

RHAMNES.

You should have borne her to the house.

EUCCHARIS.

Alone,
I'd not the power. Is nothing seen ?

RHAMNES.

Not yet.

Far as the eye can reach, are sea and clouds,
But of a boat no trace appears.

SAPPHO. *[starting up.]*

A boat!

And where?

RHAMNES.

None yet we see, O Sappho!

SAPPHO.

[sinking again into the arms of Eucharis.]

Not yet! not yet!

RHAMNES.

The morning air blows fresh.

To lead you to your room, Sappho, I pray!

[Sappho makes a sign of denial.]

RHAMNES.

O be persuaded! follow to the house.

[Sappho refuses, Rhamnes retreating.]

Alas!

Your sorrow wounds; it cuts me to the heart.

EUCCHARIS.

O see ! Why throng the people thus ? Up from
The shore they stream. Climb thou the rock and
look.

[*Sappho springs up, and stands, bent forward,
listening anxiously.*]

RHAMNES.

The gods be thanked ! they come upon the left.
That wooded point, far in the water thrust,
Conceals the welcome sight. A crowd of boats
With flashing oars fly past each other, and
Near the shore.

EUCCHARIS.

The fugitives — are they with them ?

RHAMNES.

The sun so blinds I know them not. Yet hold !
One nears the shore, a messenger. The prow,
It strikes. The shepherd from the vale it is.
He flourishes his staff. They prisoners
Are, 'tis certain. Here, my friends, here ! ap-
proach !

EUCCHARIS.

Sappho, be calm, be self-possessed.

COUNTRYMAN.

[*enters.*]

Health, Sappho ! health to thee !

EUCCHARIS.

A prisoner

Is he ?

COUNTRYMAN.

Yes.

RHAMNES.

Then where ?

EUCCHARIS.

And how ?

COUNTRYMAN.

Bravely on

They held. We, all unskilled in steering, to reach
Them was, I feared, in vain. In the broad sea
At last we spied his boat, and then the race
Began. Soon was he reached, and soon enclosed.
But he, with the left arm seizing the girl,
The dagger in his hand — Shall I go on ?

[*Sappho hints that he shall proceed.*]

Dagger in hand, he towards us rushed. A blow

Of force, aimed with the oar, the little
Maiden struck, and wounded on the brow.

[*Sappho conceals her eyes with her hands.*]

She sank. Lifting, he bore her in his arms ;
And we seizing that moment, our prisoner
He became. Already they are landing there.
Behold them both. The maiden wavers, faints.

SAPPHO.

Not here ! not here !

RHAMNES.

Where else ? Already
Are they here.

SAPPHO.

Who'll save me from this hour ? Thou,
Aphrodite ! thy votary protect !

[*Sappho hastens to the back-ground, and ascends
the steps of the altar. Her servants and people
throng around her.*]

*Phaon supporting Melitta. Country people.
Sappho with her servants in the back-ground.*]

PHAON.

Forbear ! To touch her let none venture now.
Although disarmed, not without arms am I.

Each limb in her defence becomes an arm.
 Melitta, here ! ah, tremble not ! no ill,
 While I have breath, shall touch thy life ! Villains !
 Look at that lovely head, so innocent !
 Men are you, and could injure her ? This
 Only could a woman do ! Revenge and
 Cowardice belong to women.

[looking at one of the men.]

'T was thou
 That raised the impious hand against her !
 I know thee ! forth ! lest I defraud the gods,
 The avengers, of their prey. *[To Melitta.]*
 How art thou,
 Love ?

MELITTA.

Well.

PHAON.

Thy glance denies it. Thou art pale,
 Thou tremblest ! 'T is the first lie thy lips have
 Ever spoken. Here, rest upon this bank,
 Where first thy limpid, heaven-clear eye first
 Opened for me, and with its beaming light
 Like morning's glow, chased sleep forever from
 me ;
 Here, where love began its gentle work, — here

Shall it be fulfilled.

[*To the others.*

Speak ! where is Sappho ?

MELITTA.

O, Phaon, rouse her not !

PHAON.

Be calm. Am I

Not free ? Who gave the right my steps to hem ?

From Hellas justice has not fled. This

Shall the proud one learn. Melitta, come ; to

Sappho let us hasten.

A COUNTRYMAN.

[*barring the way.*

Thou must remain.

PHAON.

Who dares to hold me, who ?

THE PEOPLE.

All who are here !

PHAON.

I ! a free man !

A COUNTRYMAN.

Thou wert, but now a

Penalty is due.

PHAON.

A penalty, and why ?

COUNTRYMAN.

The robbery of a slave is held a crime.

PHAON.

Sappho demands a ransom, and were it
Cræsus' treasure, it should be paid !

COUNTRYMAN.

You,

It becomes to plead, and not to dictate.

PHAON.

Are you so abject, tame, to bend your heads,
Your manly hands to lend, to aid a woman's
Hate, to serve the changing humors of her love ?
To stand by me I ask, and to avenge
My wrong.

COUNTRYMAN.

Of right or wrong, 't is Sappho must
Decide.

PHAON.

Thou ancient man ! and dost not blush

Such abject words to speak. Who then is Sappho,
That on her tongue the scale of justice hangs ?
Is she the umpire in this land ?

COUNTRYMAN.

She is,
For love. Not that she orders, but we, we
Willingly obey.

PHAON.

Her charms she's woven
Over all. How far the enchantment reaches
I will see. On, on to her presence.
[*He endeavors to go to the house.*]

COUNTRYMAN.

Back !

PHAON.

In vain you threaten ; Sappho I will see.
She trembles at my presence. There, at the
Altar, her I see, her servants kneeling round.

[*Phaon presses through the crowd. The circle
of slaves opens, and Sappho is seen kneeling on the
steps.*]

PHAON.

What wouldst thou on the altar steps ! The gods
Hear not the impious prayer !

[He takes Sappho's arm. At his touch she starts up, and hastens from the altar, without looking at him. Phaon follows her.]

Avoid me, wouldst thou? Thou must with me speak!

Ah, tremble, Sappho! 'T is thy turn to Tremble now. Know'st thou what thou hast done?

What right to venture hadst thou, to detain,
A freeman to detain, in shameful bonds?
Thy slaves, in unaccustomed arms, to send,
To make a prisoner of the free? Speak!
So silent now! The poet's lip is dumb!

SAPPHO.

Too much! it is too much!

PHAON.

With anger glows
Thy eye. The blush of pride flames in thy cheek!
Thou'rt right. O throw away the mask, and be
Again thyself. Thou Circe! menace and kill!

SAPPHO.

It is too much! up! arm thyself, my heart!

[To Rhamnes.]

Go! the slave Melitta bring. Her only
I detain. The rest are free.

PHAON.

Back ! and forbear !

Let no one venture to approach. Ransom
 Dost thou seek ? I am not rich, but parents
 Have I, friends, who 'll tax themselves, to obtain
 From avarice good fortune.

SAPPHO.

I ask not gold ;
 Mine own I claim. Melitta must remain.

PHAON.

By all the gods, she stays not ! no ! Thyself
 Hast cancelled all thy rights when thou upon
 Her life the dagger drew ! Her service, not
 Her life, thou hadst the right to use. Dost thou
 Believe I 'd leave it in thy hands ? Once more,
 Demand her price, and suffer us to go.

SAPPHO.

[*to Rhamnes.*

Obey my order. Bring Melitta forth !

PHAON.

[*to Rhamnes.*

Forbear !

By touching her you touch upon your death !

[*To Sappho.*

Is then thy bosom wholly savage now ?

Melts it no more at human pain and grief ?
The lyre destroy ; the poisonous asp
Bear sway ; nor song breathe longer from thy lips.
The poet's golden gifts thou hast betrayed ;
No longer consecrates thy name the art !
Of this life's hopes no longer best, lifting
Its flower-crowned head to the bright stars ;
A poisonous charm hast been with thee ;
Thy enemies to injure and confound.
Far other once, in earlier, fairer
Days, I painted Sappho ! spotless her heart
And tender, like her song ; her mind and song
Alike transparent. The tender sounds flowing
From her charmed lips, awoke the melody
Within my breast, and all our life was
Harmony. What magic stroke has changed
Thee thus ? Ah, look at me ! turn not thine eyes
So timidly from mine ! Let me thy face
Peruse ; ah, let me know if 't is thyself.
Are these the lips I've touched, and those the
eyes
So heavenly smiled ? Ah, Sappho, thou art
Sappho still !

[He turns her towards him and their eyes meet.]

SAPPHO.

[shuddering.]

Alas !

PHAON.

Yet art thou Sappho ! that was Sappho's voice.
Whate'er I've said the wind shall bear away ;
No root of bitterness from either heart
Shall spring. Clear as the sun after the storm
Beams out, the memory of the past shall be.
O welcome it, and be to me again
What once thou wert, e'er I had seen thee thus,
But in my distant home adored — the
Image of the godlike ; and, erring since,
Have for a human form mistook. Be thou
Once more a goddess ! bless once more !

SAPPHO.

Deceiver !

PHAON.

No ; that I am not. If love I swore, 't was
Never to deceive. I loved thee as the
Gods are loved ! as we adore the beautiful
And good. Descend we then to lower worlds
Unpunished, from the banquet of the gods ?
The hand the golden lyre does consecrate,
Is severed from all meaner work.
Myself, wavering in empty frenzy
Of the mind, in contest with the world and
With myself, thee I beheld. Inexplicable,

With bands invisible, but strong, thou drew
Me from mine own, to thee. My dream of thee
Too humble was for scorn, too elevate
For love. Ah, happy only can the equal
Love!

Then saw I her, and the deep fount
Of joy, sprang up towards heaven! till then,
The secret fountain of my life. Melitta!
Come! plead thou! O be not timid. Sappho
Is mild and good. Unveil the liquid crystal
Of thine eye, that she within thy breast may
look,
And all thy spotless innocence perceive!

MELITTA.

[approaches Sappho timidly.]

Sappho! beloved!

SAPPHO. *[rejecting her.]*

Forth! leave me!

MELITTA.

Ah, she's displeased!

PHAON.

Ah, she is yet all that I feared to think.
Leave her, Melitta! return again to me.

Thou shalt not plead. The proud shall not before

My eyes reject and scorn thy prayer. She
Knows thee not, else she would kneel to thee ;
The guilty to the just. Silence thy prayer ;
Return to me !

MELITTA.

No ; let me kneel. The child
It suits to kneel before its mother ; to
Believe her chiding just. Never against
Her will, will I again rebel.

PHAON.

'T is not thyself alone thou humblest. By
This humility you injure me. Means
May be found our wishes to fulfil.

MELITTA.

O say not so. A gift alone, to me
Were freedom dear. Compelled, a burthen !
Here will I kneel ; a gentle look alone,
A gracious word my pardon shall confirm !
How often, Sappho, at thy feet I've knelt,
How oft have risen joyfully in tears !
Thou wilt not leave me weeping now for grief !
Look down upon thy child, my Sappho !

[*Sappho remains with her head resting upon the shoulder of Eucharis.*]

PHAON.

Canst thou thus cold and silent listen ?

MELITTA.

She is not cold — though silent are her lips,
I feel her heart speaking to mine. Sappho !
Decide 'twixt him and me. Commandest thou
To follow Phaon, cheerfully I go !
And bidst thou stay, O gods ! I stay. Sappho,
Thou tremblest ! Dost thou hear thy child ?

PHAON.

[*Throws his arms around Melitta and kneels with her.*]

Love give to men, and to the gods ambition.
Give us our own, and take thou thine, O Sappho !
Think who thou art, and what thou dost, O friend !

[*Sappho, at the last appeal, rises and looks intently at the kneeling lovers, then turns quickly, and goes out without speaking. Eucharis and the servants follow.*]

MELITTA.

Alas, she flies ! she has her child denied !

PHAON.

Arise, my child ! kneel not to men, nor pray —
The gods for us remain, and we ourselves !

MELITTA.

I cannot live beneath her frown. The glass,
In which I read my faults was always
Sappho's eye. It shows me now deformed. Alas !
How must she suffer — the injured one !

PHAON.

To her, thou lendest all thyself. Far other
Waves swell her proud breast !

MELITTA.

Is Sappho proud ?
To me she ever was indulgent, good.
If sometimes harsh, the harsh outside concealed
The sweet and tender fruit. Alas, alas !
That I could e'er forget her tenderness !

RHAMNES.

Alas for thee indeed, that thou couldst e'er
Forget.

PHAON.

[to Rharnnes.]

Is Sappho then so good and mild ?
Why tremble then ?

RHAMNES.

She angered as she went ; and
Without limit, like her love, her anger
Ever burns.

PHAON.

What can she threaten ?

RHAMNES.

A slave's

Escape is death !

PHAON.

Who dare say that ?

RHAMNES.

The laws

Have so decreed.

PHAON.

I will protect Melitta.

RHAMNES.

Thou ? and who will then protect thyself ?

PHAON.

And did the earth now gape ; thundered the sea

To swallow all; the powers of air and earth
 Could she combine; firm would I hold Melitta,
 Herself and all her threats despise!

RHAMNES.

Despise!

And Sappho? Who then art thou, thy voice
 To raise against the voice of men! To speak
 Where Greece has spoken? Madman and fool!
 thou

Hast no scale her worth to gauge, therefore to
 Thee 't is valueless. The jewel has no
 Worth, because thy eyes are blind. She loved
 thee!

From the dust she raised thee up, unthankful
 Serpent that thou art, that now thy venom'd tooth
 Hast fleshed within her heart. On thee
 Her riches lavished; on thee, who had, to feel
 Their worth, no heart! This only stain in all
 Her precious life!

Speak not! the very pride
 That rises now against her is not thine.
 How from thy lowliness hadst risen, thou,
 (Of the forgotten most forgot) to murmur
 'Gainst the pearl of Greece, 'gainst Hellas' fairest
 Jewel? She looked upon and gave thee pride,
 That now thou darest rebel.

PHAON.

The poet's fame
With her contest I not.

RHAMNES. *[with scorn.*

Thou ventur'est not ?
As though thou couldst ! Her name upon the stars
She has traced with diamond-pointed letters,
And only with the stars 't will fade away.
In distant lands, among strange men, 't will
Echo, long after these our mortal frames
Have perished, our graves no more are found :

Then
Sappho's soul will speak from out strange lips ;
Her songs will live embalmed in unknown
tongues,
And thine, thy name will live ! Be proud of thy
Undying name ! In distant lands, by men
Unknown, when centuries have passed away,
And time has swallowed all, 't will echo then
From every mouth. " 'T was Sappho sang the
song,
And Phaon caused her death."

MELITTA.

O, Phaon, thou !

PHAON.

Peace ! be still !

RHAMNES.

Poor comforter thou art.

Thou callest peace with fear-compelled voice.
Thy crime thou knowest, and tremblest at revenge.
Sappho 'll not fail ! The poet's fame with her,
You 'll venture not to contest. Her heart alone
You doubt. Observe, and look about thee well ;
What is there here to thank but Sappho's heart ?
Not one is here she has not blest ; not one
Who owes not house or field to her ; estate
Or goods by her mild rule improved. Others
Richer traces bear of Sappho's gentle
Sway. Not one, whose heart not higher beats
Himself to name, of Mytilene, the
Countryman of Sappho. Ask the trembler
At thy side, companion she has been, far
More than slave. What had she then to offer
Thee, which was not Sappho's work ? Does she
then
Charm ? 't is Sappho's mind speaks from her lips ;
And from Melitta's eyes, beams Sappho's soul.
Press not thy brows ; in vain thou strivest ; in vain
Thy crime from memory to erase. What wouldst
Thou do ? Where flee ? For thee upon this earth
There 's no asylum more ! no refuge here
For thee ! In every pious breast will rise
A witness 'gainst the false, the false to love ;
To beauty treacherous. Before thy steps

Will go the rumor of thy crime. Fame,
Trumpet-tongued in human ears, will shriek,
“Behold the traitor to the gods, the false
To Sappho!” And shouldst thou free as air thus
Wander, with Melitta wander through the land;
With her, to whom protection is a crime,
No Greek for thee would open wide his door,
No temple gate would on its hinges turn;
Trembling thou’st flee from altar steps to altar,
Where the priest’s sentence called thee “the pro-
fane.”

Eumenides, avenging furies grim,
Shaking their serpent hair, would follow on,
And shriek within thy ears the injured
Sappho’s name, till the grave yawned for thee—

MELITTA.

Forbear! forbear!

PHAON.

A maniac wouldst thou
Make me?

RHAMNES.

That wert thou when thou scorned the good.
Enjoy the fruit thou hast planted.

MELITTA.

Let us to her.

PHAON.

Who 'll save me from this torment ?

EUCCHARIS.

[enters to the others.

Rhamnes, thou art here ! come ! hasten !

RHAMNES.

Wherefore ?

EUCCHARIS.

To Sappho. I fear she is ill.

RHAMNES.

The gods

Forbid !

EUCCHARIS.

I followed her afar, till gained
The largest hall. Concealed, and with sharp eye,
Her motions all I watched. Leaning, and raised
Upon a pedestal, she looked far o'er
The distant sea, that raged and chafed upon
The rock-bound coast. With pallid cheek and
eyes,
Veiled with their lids, all motionless she stood,
Among those marble statues, one of them.
Only she seized the flowers, the gold and

Ornaments within her reach, and cast them
Musing, deep in the raging sea. Their fall
With longing eyes she seemed to follow.
I nearer drew ; but now a sound I heard
That shook her inmost soul. Suspended from
On high, the sea-breeze touched the lyre,
And pensive played within its untuned strings ;
Deep sighing, she looked up, and all her being
Thrilled, shaken invisibly by higher
Powers. Her eyes with a strange fire illumed,
A lovely smile played o'er her mouth. The
Firm-closed lips were parted now, and words
Came forth so solemn and profound, they seemed
Not Sappho's words, but edicts of the gods !
" O, friend ! " she said, " thou dost admonish me
Of passing time ; O, thanks ! I understand
Thee well." How the wall she gained, and how
The lyre high-hanging reached, I know not.
Her arm, a beam of light it seemed ; and as
I looked she held the lyre and pressed the strings
Upon her storm-moved breast ; while audibly
The breathing sounds came forth and passed
away.

Suspended as a votive wreath on the
Domestic altar, hung her crown ; she took
And wound it round her head ; the purple robe,
A glowing veil, o'er her fair shoulders threw.
Who first had seen her now, with lyre in hand,

And look inspired, upraised, the altar steps
 Ascending, her whole light form enwrapped in
 Light, in prayer had bent his trembling knees,
 And hailed her, the immortal. Silent and
 Motionless she stood, yet through my limbs
 Crept shuddering fear ; I quailed beneath
 Her piercing eye, and fled to thee.

RHAMNES.

Left her ?

Return ! yet see, herself comes near !

[Sappho enters richly dressed as in the first act. The purple mantle on her shoulders, the laurel crown upon her head, and the golden lyre in her hand. She is surrounded by her women, and descends the steps of the marble collonade.]

MELITTA.

Sappho ! dearest mistress !

SAPPHO. *[calm and earnest.*

What wouldst thou, then ?

MELITTA.

Rent is the bandage from my opened eyes.
 Let me again become thy slave ? Receive
 Again what's thine, and pardon me.

SAPPHO.

So ill
Advised believe me not. No gift from thee
Will Sappho take. That was my own, thou canst
Not give nor take.

PHAON. [*kneeling.*

O listen, Sappho !

SAPPHO.

Beware ! kneel not to me ; devoted am I
To the gods !

PHAON.

With gentle eye thou look'st at me, O Sappho !
Rememberest thou ——

SAPPHO.

Thou speakest of things long past.
Thee, Phaon, I sought ! and found myself.
Thou understood me not. Farewell ! on firmer
Ground my hopes must rest !

PHAON.

Hatest thou me, then ?

SAPPHO.

Hatred ! Love ! Is there no third ? Worthy wert

Thou, and are so still, and ever will to me
 Be so ; like a dear chance companion that
 Accident awhile led in my boat. The
 Goal once reached, we part, each wandering on
 His path alone ; yet often from the path,
 The widening path, recall the friendly meeting.
[Her voice fails.]

PHAON. *[much moved.]*

O Sappho !

SAPPHO.

Forbear ! we part in peace !
[To the others.]

You, who have Sappho's weakness seen, O pardon !

To Sappho's weakness be ye reconciled !
 The bow when bent first shows its power.

[She points to the altar in the back-ground.]

The flame
 Is lit. To Aphrodite it mounts, clear as
 The beam of coming day.

[To her servants and Phaon.]

And now remove !
 Leave me to counsel with mine own — mine own !

RHAMNES.

ObeY her will. Let all withdraw.

[*They draw back.*]

SAPPHO.

[*approaches the altar that stands close to the cliff.*]

Ye lofty gods ! divine ! With blessings rich
You've crowned my life. My hand the muses'
Lyre has touched ; the poet's cup for me
Runs o'er. A heart to feel, a mind to think,
And power to form my thought to music,
You have given. With rich blessings you have
Blessed. I thank you !
With victory you've crowned my feeble brow,
And sowed in distant lands the poet's fame,
Of immortality the seed. Echoes
From strangers' tongues the song I struck upon
My golden lyre, and only with the earth
The fame of Sappho dies.

I thank you !

In life's unmingled cup, crowned high with sweets,
The poet only sips, but does not drink.
Obedient to your highest wish, the sweet,
Unemptied cup I place aside,
And drink not.
What you decreed, all-powerful gods !
Has Sappho finished. Deny me not the
Last reward within your power to grant, —

No weakness, no decay, let Sappho know.
 In her full strength, in nature's bloom, O take
 Her quickly to yourselves !
 Forbid that e'er a priestess of the gods
 Should be the theme of god-denying foes !
 The sport of fools, in their own folly wise !
 You bruised the flower, break now the stem ;
 Perfect in truth what was begun in love,
 And spare the conflict's bleeding struggle. Grant !
 O grant the victory ! the victor's weakness spare !
 The flame is kindling while the sun ascends !
 I feel I'm heard ! Great gods, I thank you !
 Melitta ! Phaon ! come nearer to me !

[She kisses Phaon on the forehead.]

A friend from distant worlds salutes thee thus !

[Embracing Melitta.]

Thy mother, dead ! sends thee this kiss ! Fare-
 well !

There, on the altar of love's goddess, love
 Fulfils, of love, the melancholy fate !

[She hastens to the altar.]

RHAMNES.

What means she ? Inspired is all her being,
 The splendor of immortals wraps her round.

[Sappho, who has gradually approached the

edge of the cliff, upon which the altar stands, stretches both hands over Melitta and Phaon.]

SAPPHO.

To men give love ! ambition to the gods ! [pho !
What for you blooms, enjoy, and think of Sap-
Of life the last debt I pay ! The gods
To you, grant blessings ; and to me — themselves.
[She springs from the cliff into the sea.]

PHAON.

Hold ! Sappho ! hold !

MELITTA.

Alas, she falls ! she dies !

PHAON. *[busied with Melitta.]*

Quick ! quick ! she dies ! Forth from the shore
to save !

RHAMNES.

[has climbed upon the rock.]

The gods protect ! There on that cliff she falls ;
There is she crushed, destroyed ! Bears she off ?
Impossible ! alas ! too late !

PHAON.

Why creep
You here ? a boat ! haste ! haste to save her.

RHAMNES.

[*descending.*]

Forbear ! it is too late ! Grant her the grave
The gods decree. That she, disdaining this
False earth, within the sacred waves has
Chosen for her rest.

PHAON.

Dead !

RHAMNES.

Dead !

PHAON.

Dead ! alas !

Impossible ! She is not dead ! not dead !

RHAMNES.

Withered the laurel ! broken are the strings ;
Upon the earth there was no home for her ;
To heaven has Sappho, to her own, returned !

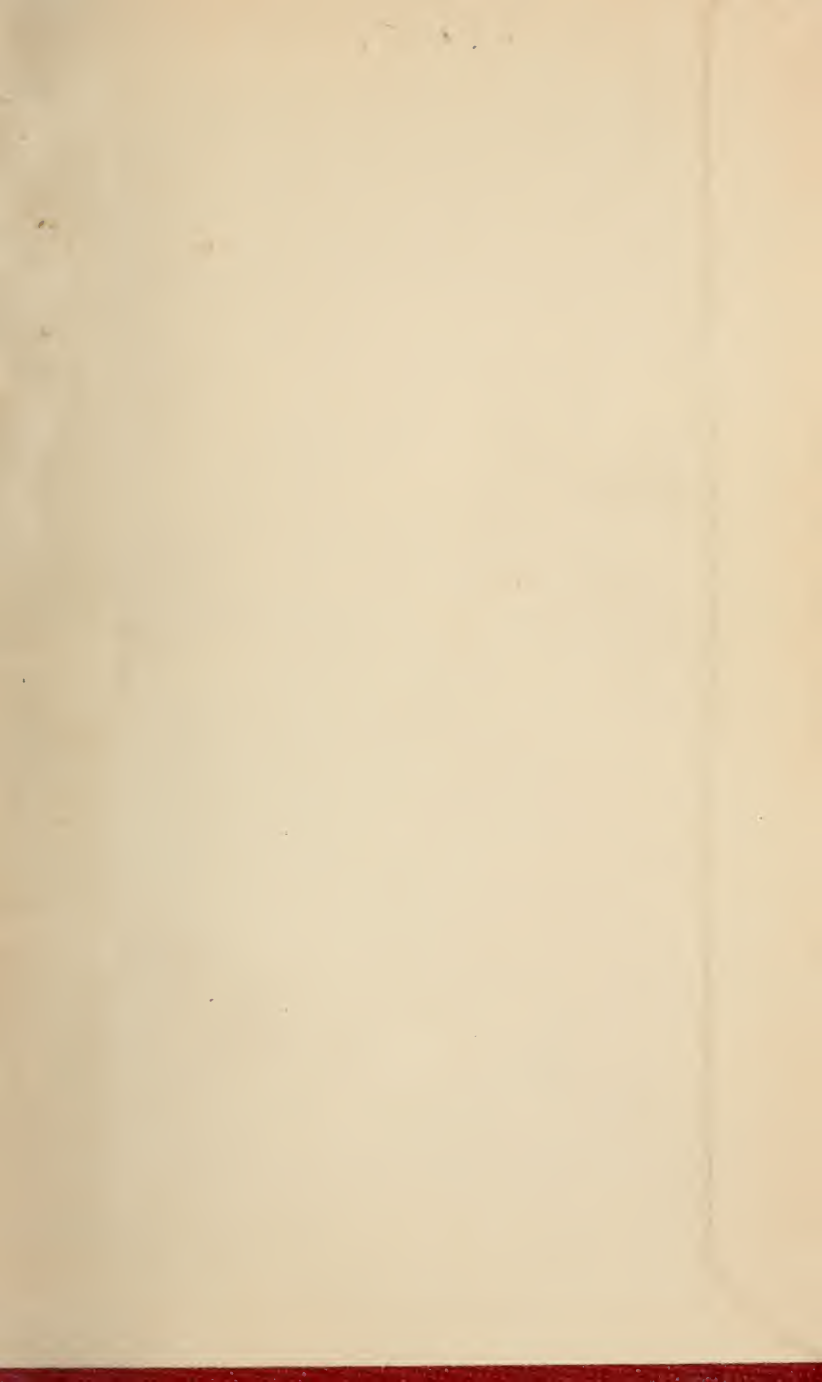
The curtain falls.

END.

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